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ABSTRACT

Guidelines for arranging environments appropriate for preschool-age children are provided in this staff development module, one of a series for child caregivers working in military day care centers. The document is divided into two parts. In part 1, discussion focuses on how environments affect children's feelings and behavior and on ways to organize indoor and outdoor play areas to offer children a variety of experiences. Checklists for rating center environments are provided. A variety of topics are discussed in part 2, including managing the preschool environment, supporting children's personal growth, and encouraging development through play. In addition, materials selection and activities planning for preschool children are described. Checklists also follow these discussions. The final section offers guidelines for acquiring resources to support caregiving activities. (RH)

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Department of Defense

Creating Environments For Preschoolers

Child Environment Series

Military Child Care Project

April 1982

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
MANPOWER, RESERVE AFFAIRS, AND LOGISTICS

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FOREWORD

This series of manuals for Child Care Givers on DoD Installations is issued under the authority of DoD Instruction 6060.1, "Training Manuals for Child Care Givers on DoD Installations," January 19, 1981. Its purpose is to provide child care givers with training materials that include the latest techniques and procedures for the safe care and guiding development of children entrusted to their care.

This series of manuals, DoD 6060.1-M-1 through DoD 6060.1-M-17, was developed under the auspices of the Department of Health and Human Services by the Department of Army, in cooperation with the Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.

The provisions of this series of manuals apply to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Military Departments, and the Defense Agencies (hereafter referred to as DoD Components) whose heads shall ensure that the manuals are distributed or otherwise made available to all child care givers on DoD installations and that these materials are used in regional and inter-Service workshops, seminars, and training sessions.

This series of manuals is effective immediately.

Send recommended changes to the manuals through channels to:

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Washington, D.C. 20301

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R. Dean Tice
Lieutenant General, USA
Deputy Assistant Secretary

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INTRODUCTION

en-vi-ron-ment *the total of those things which surround; surroundings, including both people and things.*

This book is about creating environments for preschoolers - three, four and five year olds. What children see, hear, smell, taste and touch affects how they feel and behave. Children watch and learn from everything that surrounds them. What is in the environment, how it is arranged and what the adults do will affect the preschoolers' experiences.

This book is divided into two parts, with selected resources at the end. PART ONE outlines some ways to organize and arrange physical space. PART TWO suggests some good ways to use the people and things in that space. The environments we describe are designed to help children be independent and creative. Independence comes as children learn and practice skills through the play they choose. Creativity grows out of finding more than one way to do something or more than one right answer to a question.

There is a lot of information in this book. Nearly every page talks about a different and important idea. We suggest that you read and do the checklist at the end of just one section at a time. Once you have read the whole book, keep it handy so you can refer to it from time to time.

We do not pretend to provide all the answers. All we can do is present a beginning or guide. It is up to each caregiver to use and add to this basic information in individual and creative ways. Good child care programs happen when caregivers know and understand their preschoolers and have fun with them. So watch the children in your care. Think about how they react to their surroundings. Then you can evaluate, plan and manage environments especially for preschoolers.

PLANNING YOUR CENTER'S PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

PART ONE

IN PART ONE you will discover:

. how environments affect feelings and behavior

. good ways to organize indoor and outdoor play areas to offer children a variety of experiences

. checklists for rating your center's environment

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTS

THE ENVIRONMENT AFFECTS YOUR FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOR

The people, space, climate, colors and sounds around you affect your feelings and behavior. All of these things outside your body are a part of your *environment*. As human beings, we quickly learn to give meaning to the things around us. Different types of space, clothing, and behaviors give us different messages about where we are and how we are to behave. Studies and experiments have shown that the same environment can have different effects on different people.

Think about these surprising ways that physical environment affects our behavior:

A crate painted dark blue seems heavier than an identical one that is yellow.

Noise sounds loudest in a white room and quieter in a purple room.

Well-lit classrooms encourage neatness and reduce discipline problems.

High sounds are more tiring than low sounds.

Excitable children feel most comfortable with stimulating colors, like reds and oranges, while more withdrawn children are more comfortable with cool colors, like blues and greens.

Until children are about four-and-a-half they pay more attention to the color of things than to the shape of things.

SOME ENVIRONMENTS SEEM MORE INTERESTING THAN OTHERS

A child care center is part of the community where it is located and the neighborhood it serves. That community and neighborhood affect the building and the people who use a particular center. The military child care center often is a part of the plain square buildings, asphalt roads and neat, orderly layout of the installation where it is located. The center may be in an old commissary or the vacant wing of a hospital. The sameness of these buildings and this environment may be boring to the eye and the mind. These buildings pose a real challenge to the caregivers and children who use them. That challenge is to create an interesting environment - one which excites the mind and moves preschool children to wonder, explore, learn and grow.

A leading U.S. newspaper reported a study comparing the artwork of German children living in 18 new "model communities" with those from youngsters in older German cities. The results showed some differences that environments can make in children's lives:

Children are affected by their surroundings. The children in the older cities seemed to like their surroundings. They painted a lot of detail in their drawings of things they found exciting in the more crowded, older neighborhood.

The planned communities were not as interesting to children. The "model communities" in West Germany had been planned with children in mind. But the artwork of the children living there showed that the tall apartment houses, big lawns and fenced play areas made the children feel isolated, bored and fenced-in.

Children like interesting surroundings and variety. The study found that the children did not feel "free" with orderly open space around them. They preferred to be among people and things that excited their imaginations.

THE MILITARY CENTER IS PART OF A LARGER ENVIRONMENT

The military child care center is a part of the larger community created by the installation. The center environment should be planned with the needs and life-styles of children from military families in mind. For example, children may have to learn to live with frequent moves or separation from a parent. Of course, children growing up in civilian families may face some of the same situations. It is just that children in military families more often may have experiences like the ones below.

Cultural differences in the home With military installations all over the world, it is not uncommon for one parent to be from a culture different from the other. This gives children the advantage of learning firsthand about two cultures.

Living in close quarters Military housing may require family members and different families to live much closer together than they might in a civilian setting. Neighbors learn to share and help each other.

Death Death is a fact of life. In the military setting many people learn to face the reality of death and live fuller lives as a result.

Exposure to differences Children in military families may live in integrated installation housing or attend integrated schools, churches and hospitals. They have the benefit of a broader exposure to cultural differences than do children in many civilian settings.

Moving Frequent moves uproot families from the support of their communities, friends and close relatives, especially grandparents. Adjusting to new environments helps young children learn to be more adaptable.

Non-traditional family structures Duty may call a father or mother away for a week, a month, a year. Although this may be difficult, it can help develop independence and self-reliance.

Travel/language With installations all over the world, children find themselves in new lands hearing and learning new languages. They see new customs and eat new foods.

CENTER ENVIRONMENTS SPEAK TO PRESCHOOLERS

When you enter a restaurant for the first time, you look for cues in the design and arrangment to determine your behavior. A wide open area with tables and chairs is an open invitation to seat yourself. A stack of trays and a cafeteria line tells you to serve yourself. These are examples of how we take cues from our environments. Physical arrangements often tell us how we are to behave. When children enter a child care center for the first time, they look for cues to guide their behavior. Of course, children have not had as many experiences as adults. They cannot always be expected to see and act just as we hope or plan. Also, different children will react differently to the same things. But what they see, smell, hear, touch and taste will affect their feelings and behavior. We can help the children feel welcome and secure and, at the same time, interested and challenged. Although centers are different and caregivers have their own ways of doing things, there are some general guidelines which will help you.

Some ways to appeal to the senses of young children:

Sights Bright, cheery colors say "welcome." Walls and floors should be clean and inviting. Child-size furniture suggests, "this is a special place for children."

Smells Keep the center clean to avoid offensive odors. Flowers, spices and cooking food have pleasant aromas.

Sounds Children are sensitive to loud sounds. Add drapes, pillows and carpeting to control noise. Caregivers set the tone with the voices they use.

Touch Children like to feel all kinds of texture in toys, books, furnishings, floor coverings, outdoor play and caregiver clothing.

Taste Food means more than nutrition to children. They like appealing meals and snacks pleasantly served.

ADULTS WORK BETTER IN COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENTS

So far we have talked about the center as an environment for children. It also should be comfortable and convenient for the adults who work there. Small details like adequate storage and easy access to it are important. It is frustrating and a waste of time and energy when you can't easily get to or find what you want when you want it. Helping a group of active preschoolers find play, get through daily routines and solve their problems takes lots of energy and your total attention. There is no time to relax and talk to other adults. Caregivers need a staff room where they can have a few minutes away from the children. Here it is possible to relax and to safely enjoy a hot beverage. A work area with supplies and paper make it easier for caregivers to prepare materials for their rooms. Pay attention to any annoying parts of your day. Some simple changes can make your job easier and more pleasant.

Adults work better in comfortable, convenient surroundings:

A little privacy Caregivers should have a staff room and private bathroom. This allows for short breaks away from the sight and sounds of the children. A comfortable, attractive room shows the importance of the staff. It is refreshing for caregivers to spend a few minutes doing whatever they choose in pleasant surroundings.

A place to sit To be at a child's eye level, caregivers spend most of their time on the floor or on child-size chairs. Caregivers seldom have time to sit very long. One adult-size rocker or soft chair in the room is handy for holding a child on your lap. A low bench should be available in the outdoor play yard. Then a caregiver can sit while talking to a child or watching the group play.

A convenient routine Remember, it is the people who use environments who sometimes can best see good or bad arrangements. Look for ways to complete your routines with ease and convenience. Share your ideas with your director. A simple thing like having a cart for returning dishes to the kitchen may make your job easier.

CHECK YOUR CENTER AS AN ENVIRONMENT FOR STAFF

We have said that environments affect feelings and behavior. What is in the environment of the child care center is just as important to caregivers who work there as it is to the children. Put a check by the items below found in your center.

"ADULTS ONLY" ENVIRONMENT

____ locked storage for personal belongings

____ place to hang coat

____ staff room away from the sights and sounds of children

____ window to outside

____ adjustable heat/air conditioning

____ comfortable chairs

____ sofa or lounge

____ table and chairs

____ work area

____ private restroom

____ telephone

____ caregiver supplies

____ paper cutter

____ child care resource books

____ magazines

____ snacks, beverages available

____ sink, hot plate, refrigerator

____ things you can change like furniture or bulletin board

____ opportunities to do things you like, such as to work cross-word puzzles

____ restroom regularly stocked with soap, towels and toilet paper

____ clutter and trash routinely removed

ADULTS IN THE CHILD ENVIRONMENT

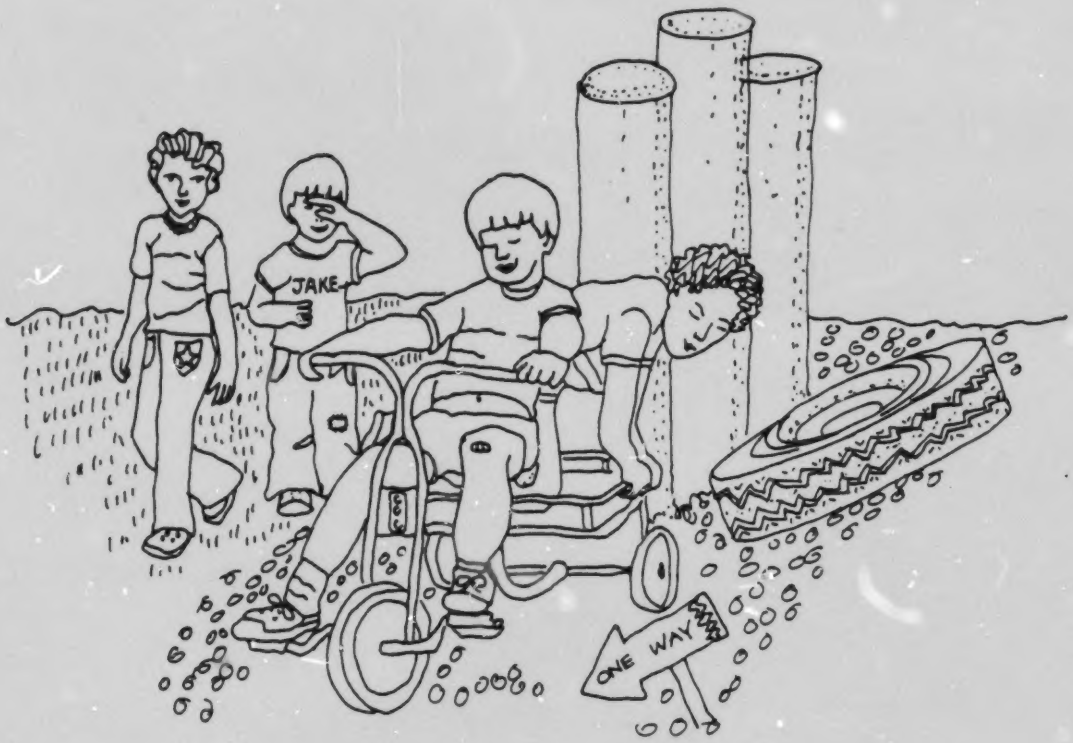
____ convenient, closed indoor storage

____ convenient, closed outdoor storage

____ comfortable low bench or seating in outdoor play yard

____ comfortable adult-size seating in indoor rooms

ARRANGING SPACE FOR PRESCHOOLERS



PLAN THE ENVIRONMENT TO HELP YOU

If it is planned right, the environment can help you do your job. Often caregivers face the challenge of working in child care centers which are in buildings originally designed for other uses. Whatever the case, some simple, creative changes may help you improve the quality of care in your center. You may learn a lot by watching how the children react to their surroundings. For example, a large, open space invites a small child to run. You can divide the room or play yard with low barriers where you want the children to walk. Use wide, open spaces both indoors and outdoors where you want to encourage active play and running. You can make your job as a caregiver both more fun and rewarding by learning to control the environment instead of the children.

Changing things may help you solve some problems in the preschool environment.

Welcome the child. Some children are upset when their parents leave them in a child care center. The things within view of a child entering your room can help welcome that child. Get down on your knees and look at the entry as a child would see it. Look for wall decorations at a child's eye level. Look for a clear view into the main play areas. An entry somewhat separate but with the play areas in sight allows time and space for saying goodbye to a parent. Children also like a convenient place to hang their coats and a cubby to store their personal things.

Plan for play. Preschool children often play alone or in small groups of four or five. They like to play behind a shelf, divider or low bushes. In these small, partly enclosed areas, children are less often distracted by other children, adults or noise. As a result, they will play with one toy or a game longer.

Make play easy-to-find. When areas are clearly marked and toys and materials are easy to find and use, children are more independent and demand less of caregivers. This gives you more time to talk to and help individual children in a relaxed, positive way.

Reduce noise and disorder indoors. Dividing a large room into areas reduces noises and makes it easier to keep toys and materials in order.

The organization of indoor and outdoor space can affect how long and how well children play. In order to meet the needs of preschoolers and add variety, it helps to divide the available space into different-sized areas. In large spaces, groups of 14 to 16 preschoolers can play or be together. Smaller, partly enclosed spaces allow for smaller groups, where four or five children can play. Children like to play in these small areas on the floor or ground, surrounded by low barriers, such as shelves, dividers, low bushes and half-buried logs or tires. The best plans allow caregivers and children to move dividers to change the size and shape of some areas. The smallest spaces are just big enough for one child. These small spots located here and there allow a child to "get away" for a moment of privacy.

To organize space consider these points:

Indoor and outdoor play areas are connected. Children enjoy seeing the outdoor play space from indoors. Moving in and out between the two areas should be easy for caregivers and children.

The amount of open space is planned. Not enough or too much open space affects the quality of play. The best play takes place in centers which leave no less than one-third, but no more than one-half of the play space open. Open spaces can be used for more than one thing, like dancing, playing games or eating snacks.

There are areas for different skill levels. Some areas and activities should appeal to older, more skilled children and some to younger, less skilled children. Children will select where to play according to what they can do.

Areas should offer a variety of play. Indoors and outdoors, preschoolers should be able to find areas for both active and quiet play. They like a wide variety of activities and materials like sand, water, books, musical instruments, records, nature study, science, arts and crafts, blocks, puzzles, toys and table games, carpentry, cooking and pretend play.

OFFER CHOICES WITH CLEAR PATHWAYS BETWEEN

A room or play yard that is divided into large group areas, small group areas and private spaces offers a variety of choices. The children must be able to see what is available for play and how to get there. Outdoors, for example, the children should be able to see the activity areas, play units, the trike path, natural environment area or garden plot. Clear pathways allow children to move freely from one place to another. Pathways most often have the same surface as the nearby floor or ground. Pathways simply are easy-to-see spaces that connect one place with another. Adults who kneel down to children's eye levels can check to see how clear the pathways really are. While kneeling, it is easy to see if a bush, a shelf, or a play unit blocks your view. It is easier for children to choose their own play when they can see what is available and how to get there.

Kneel down to the child's eye level and look for pathways that:

Go somewhere interesting. Pathways should clearly lead the children from one interesting area or play unit to another. As a child finishes climbing on a play unit, that child should be able to see something like the sandbox and how to get there.

Go around, not through other areas. Pathways are best when they go around, not through another area. This helps prevent one child from interrupting another's play. A pathway through instead of around a block-play area leads children to run through that area and knock down stacked blocks.

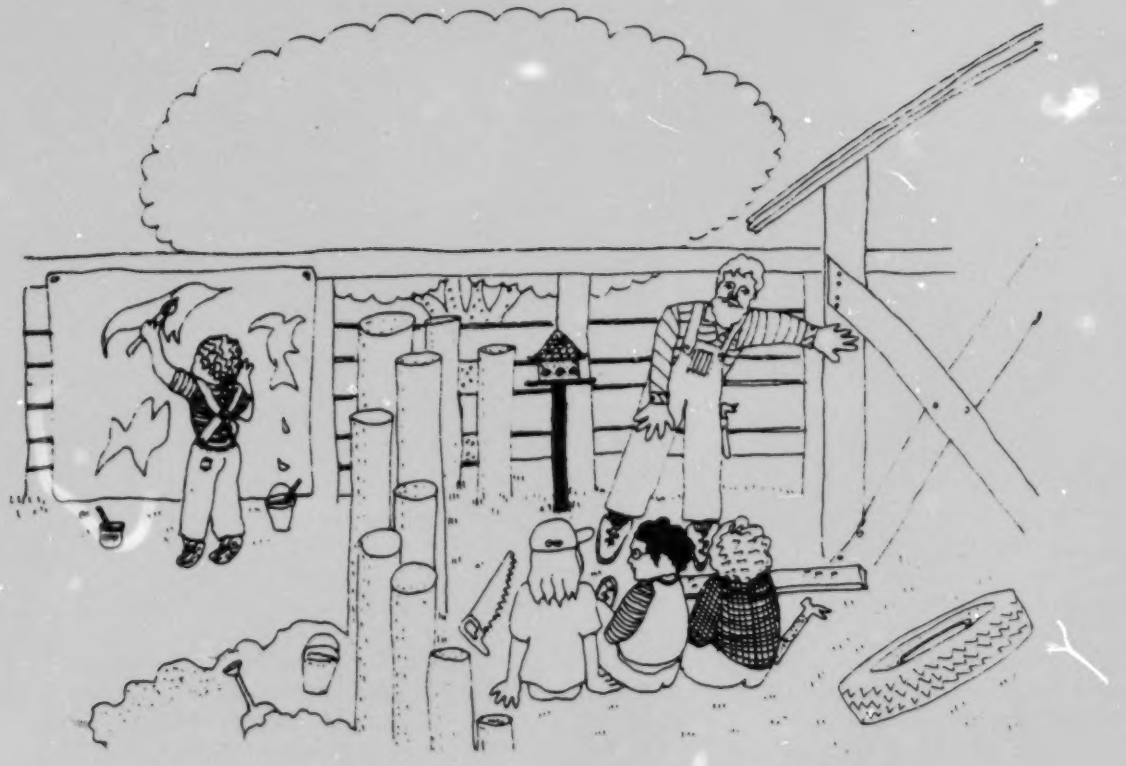
Are uncluttered and well spaced. When play units and areas are too close to each other, there is no room left for clear pathways. Then children bump into each other as they move around, increasing the chance of accidents.

Don't lead into large empty spaces. Arrangments of rooms and play yards often result in an empty space in the middle. The problem is pathways that lead into this space, but not out of it. This space becomes the place for rough play or running. The best solution is to make some changes. You can fill that empty space with an interesting activity or play unit.

MAKE ROOM FOR SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

In any group of three, four and five year olds, the children have many different interests and skill levels. Preschoolers also like to do a variety of things every day. Your room arrangement can help you satisfy the interests and abilities of these children. They prefer to play in small groups most of the time, so small areas that hold four to five children and possibly an adult help them play better and longer. These children also like a feeling of closeness and protection. Low shelves, storage units, dividers, curtains and furniture can serve to define areas, as well as to store and display the toys or materials needed there. Each small-group activity area is most interesting when it contains lots to do. Different areas may have different play surfaces, such as the floor, an easel, a table, a square of carpeting or cushions. Different colored rugs, furnishings, floor levels, or ceiling heights can help to mark these areas.

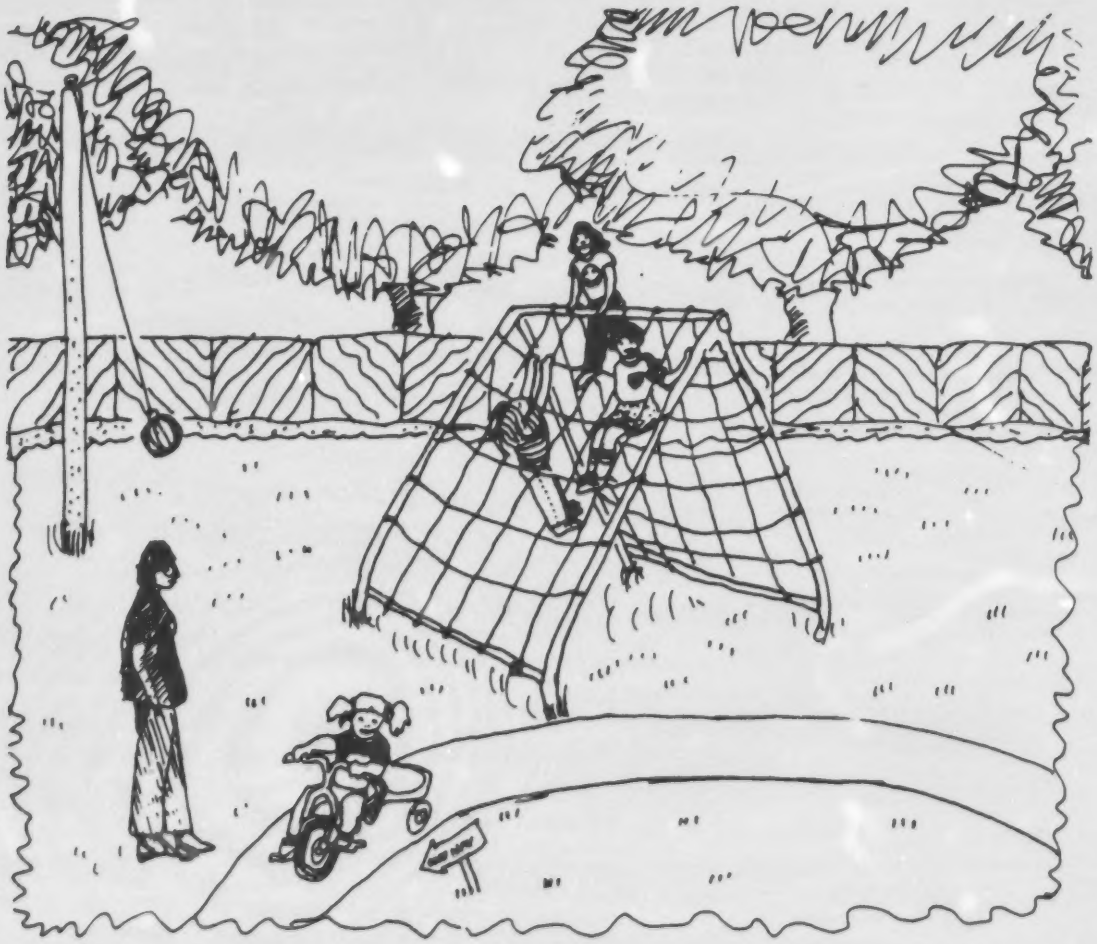
Outdoors you can have just as many small-group activity areas as you do indoors. The climate in your area will determine how much time your preschoolers can spend outdoors. Protection from the sun and wind can be provided by shelters, porches and trees. Then you can spend more time outdoors doing more kinds of things. The important thing is to think of ways to use many of the same activities outdoors that you use indoors. Some activities with messy materials like water play, painting and clay are more fun outdoors because of less worry about spilling and clean-up. The noise of carpentry is less annoying. Outdoors there are different ways to make small-group activity areas. Low bushes, half-buried tires and logs, low hills or existing buildings can partly enclose an activity space. Outdoor storage conveniently located makes it easier to get the toys and materials needed.



HAVE SOME LARGE ACTIVITY SPACES

Indoors, preschoolers spend much of their time in small groups or playing or sitting alone. However, there are times when you will want to call a group of children together for one reason or another. At certain times of the day, you might have finger plays, circle games, films, stories, music or movement activities. For this to happen, you will need to set some space aside where a group of 14 to 16 children can gather. A large space also may be used for active indoor play. You can set out mats for tumbling or make an obstacle course in a large activity space. Remember, large activity areas encourage noisy, active play. Both indoors and outdoors, locate these away from the smaller, more quiet areas.

Most of the time preschoolers will play outdoors in small groups. There may be times when you want to play a game or lead an activity like dancing or singing with a group of 14 to 16 children. This will happen more often with older four and five year olds. They are ready to follow directions and cooperate in order to enjoy the fun of a game like "Simon Says" or "In and Out the Windows." Large group activity areas with different surfaces permit different kinds of activities. Grass is soft for sitting and running. Cement or asphalt are good for bouncing balls and group games when the ground is damp.



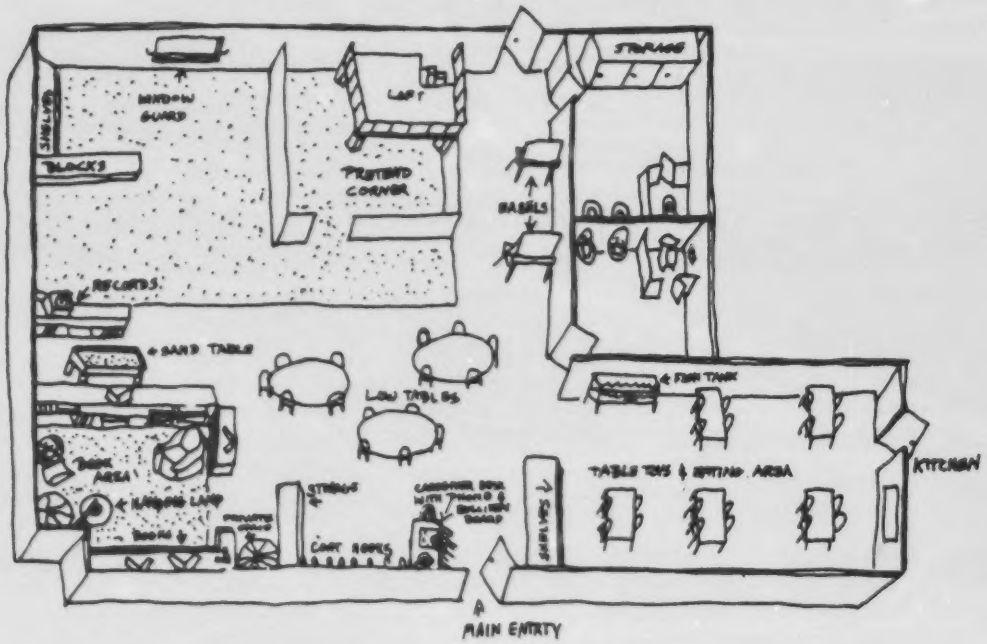
CREATE SMALL SPACES FOR GETTING AWAY AND WATCHING

Preschoolers like to be busy and active most of the time. Yet there are times when they need to get away from the other children or adults. They may need to leave a game or activity that is too hard. These young children need time and space to "get away" for a few minutes to just sit and think. A child often can solve her own problems if she has time to be alone. A child can learn by watching others at play. Spaces about three feet high with small entrances make good hideouts for children. For safe supervision, caregivers must be able to see into private spaces and reach any child who needs help. These small spaces can be found, made or bought. You may find spaces under platforms or stairs. Add some carpeting or pillows to make a cozy spot for the children. You can make small spaces from boxes and packing barrels or with tables and blankets. You can arrange shelves or dividers to leave a small space for a child to crawl into. Some centers purchase furnishings just big enough for one child at a time. When given a chance, children will make their own caves with anything you give them from hollow blocks to chairs and sheets.

The outdoor environment also can be planned to help children find a place to "get away." A private space that is clearly child-size works best. Adults should not be able to fit into these spaces. Locate private places near large-group activity areas, trike paths, or play units. Any child who wishes to leave the group or an activity can do so easily. Just make certain these private spaces are next to, not blocking, main pathways. Some private spaces can be located away from activity areas. This permits children to watch from a safe distance. A low platform or small perch allows a child to look down on the group. Both children and caregivers easily can add private spaces to a play yard with boxes, parachutes, tents, boards and other recycled materials.

TAKE A LOOK AT ONE INDOOR SPACE AREA

This plan shows a preschool room in a military child care center. The children have access to another large indoor space for active play and naps and an outdoor play space. See if you can spot the strong and weak points of this room. Compare your thoughts with those listed below.



STRENGTHS

different play areas allow for a variety of activities

private space for one child

loft four feet high adds a second level

well-defined, comfortable book area

block area out of main pathway

rug and tile provide different surfaces

child-size toilets, sinks and mirrors in bathrooms

direct access to outdoor play area

WEAKNESSES

not enough windows to outside

paint easels in a main pathway

low tables need shelves or storage with things to do nearby

pathway around low tables may encourage running

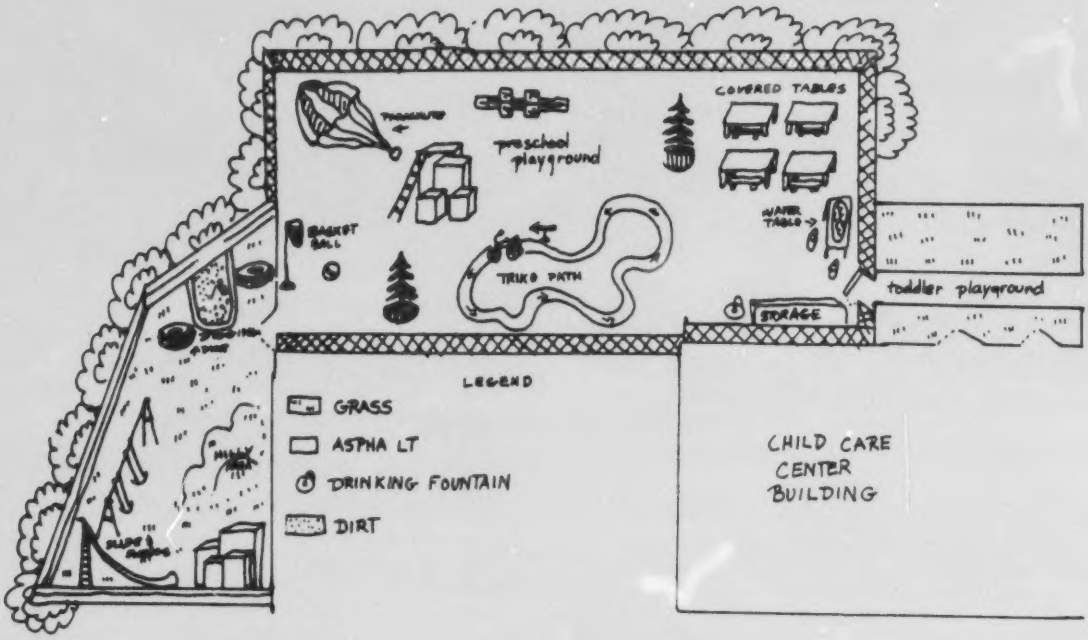
one bathroom with lower walls would improve supervision

sand table, a noisy activity, is too near the book area

eating area not inviting for small group conversations

TAKE A LOOK AT ONE OUTDOOR PLAY AREA

The plan below shows a preschool outdoor play area at a military child care center, located in a moderate climate. The play area took its shape as a result of having been located in the only space available. See if you can spot the strong and weak points of this play area. Compare your thoughts about its strengths and weaknesses with those listed below.



STRENGTHS

child-sized drinking fountains

outdoor storage

both grass and hard surfaces.

clear path to climbing structures at end of slide

swings safely located away from other play areas

tires, small hills, slide and climbing units add levels

some moveable loose parts for creative play

shrubs and different types of fences add interest to boundaries

WEAKNESSES

lacks easy access to indoors and bathrooms

needs clear organization into different sized areas

lacks small-group activity areas

needs a private space or two

hard to supervise all areas at once

needs more sheltered or covered areas

trike path in main pathway

climbing unit unsafe on asphalt

CHECK YOUR CENTER'S PRESCHOOL PLAY SPACE

Use the checklist below to help you look at and think about your center's preschool play areas. Think about ways to provide areas and opportunities for play which your center may not have.

ORGANIZATION OF PLAY YARD

____ easy access to outdoors from indoor playroom

____ variety of play spaces linked to each other, offering a wide choice of play activities

____ opportunities for preschoolers to see and play with children of different ages

____ some play areas attractive to older or more skilled children and some attractive to younger or less skilled children

____ bushes, shelters, porches or other barriers to protect play areas from winter winds and extreme summer suns

____ play structures spaced and located to avoid crowding and accidents

____ active play areas near each other and away from quiet play areas

____ bushes, low hills or other barriers to partly enclose preschool play spaces

____ clear visibility into all areas of the play yard

____ convenient storage for outdoor equipment

____ play spaces for a variety of group sizes

- ____ boxes, tents or tunnels for one child to "get away"
- ____ tires, logs or bushes creating small areas for one to three preschoolers
- ____ open spaces for active or group play

____ opportunities for caregivers and children to change the size of areas by moving dividers, boards or tires

____ easy access to bathrooms

____ outdoor water source and drinking fountains

____ child-proof fences and gates

OUTDOOR ACTIVITY AREAS

____ paved play areas for trike paths, wide pathways and hard-surfaced areas for balls and games

____ open grassy or soft-surface play areas for tumbling, running or sitting

____ large play areas for climbers, logs, spools, slides, platforms, swings or other play units

____ play areas with "loose parts," such as boxes, tires, boards and blocks or other moveable play structures

____ natural environment areas with native plants, trees, rocks, insects

____ special interest areas such as garden plots, fenced animal areas

____ small-group activity areas for books, music, arts and crafts

____ play areas at different levels - platforms, tunnels, large rocks, things to get in and under, behind and on top of

ORGANIZATION OF INDOOR SPACE

____ receiving area ____ cubbies ____ child-height coat hooks

____ a variety of spaces

- ____ large-group activity space for 14 to 16 preschoolers
- ____ several small-group activity spaces for four to five children
- ____ small "get away" or private spaces

____ clear pathways to exits and between different areas in the room

____ all areas in plain view of standing children

____ different areas clearly marked by

- ____ shelves
- ____ floor levels
- ____ ceiling heights
- ____ low dividers
- ____ colors
- ____ floor coverings

____ caregivers can see into all corners of the room

____ caregiver storage for supplies, materials

____ cot or mat storage area

INDOOR ACTIVITY AREAS

____ carpeted area for groups/active play/play units

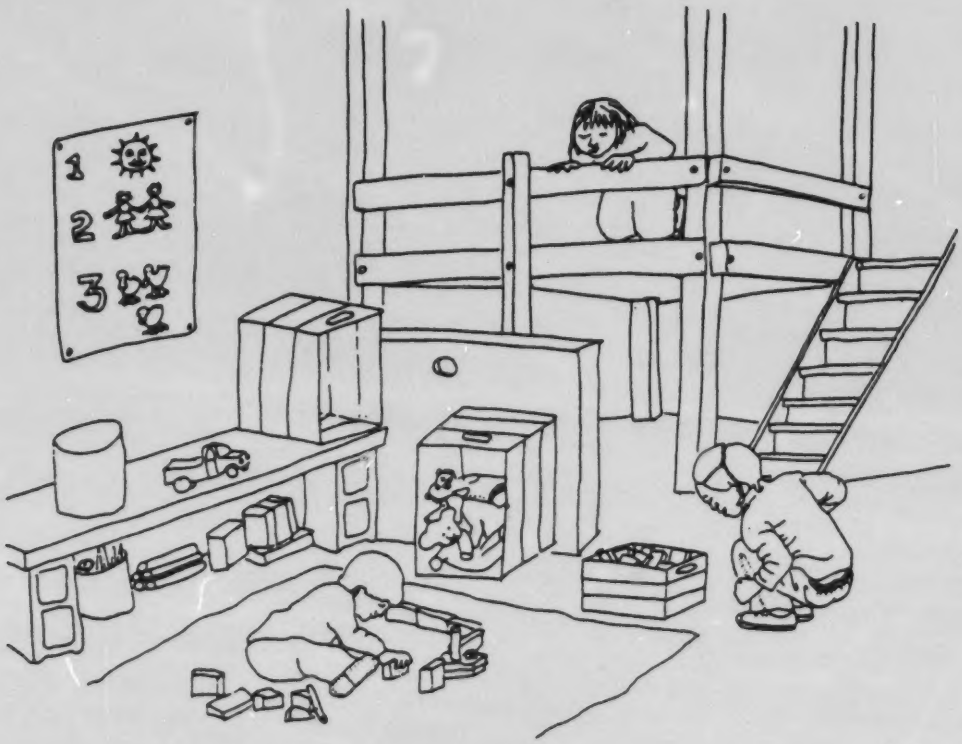
____ floor play areas

____ small-group activity area

- ____ pretend play area
- ____ puzzles and small toys
- ____ book nook
- ____ table blocks
- ____ records and tapes
- ____ nature collections
- ____ arts and crafts
- ____ musical instruments
- ____ sand table
- ____ water play
- ____ cooking
- ____ carpentry
- ____ play dough
- ____ magnets and science displays

*Adapted from *Recommendations for Child Play Areas*, Cohen, Hill, Lane, McGinty, Moore, Community Design Center, Inc., Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with the Center for Architectural and Urban Planning Research, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, 1979.

MAKING CENTER SPACES LIVEABLE



LET CHILDREN CHANGE THE SHAPE, SIZE AND USE OF THINGS

At home children often play in alleys, on porches and between buildings. If we look at what and how they play, we can improve the center as an environment for play. We can make the center more interesting, yet a safe place for children to play. Children prefer to play in simple settings like a large packing crate or a clearing near some bushes. They can pretend this spot is whatever they want it to be. They use their imaginations more with simple toys and props that can be used in several different ways. Children especially like loose parts to move around. They like to change the size and shape of their play space to fit their different make-believe games.

Below are some qualities to look for in settings, play units and toys:

Things with loose parts In addition to an area for block play, set aside space where the children can move things about in different ways. Areas with loose parts can be located both indoors and outdoors. Hollow blocks and wooden boxes are good building materials for children. Pretend play props, an old parachute and other toys add to the ways these areas can be used. With things to move around, use and change, the children can play and pretend for long periods of time in their own special ways.

Things that have more than one clear purpose Play units which children can use in more than one way are best. Then children can pretend more than one thing. Children have few ways to vary their play on an elephant slide. Play units made of rocks, logs, platforms, tunnels, ropes and tires can be a spaceship one day or a castle the next.

Things that can be combined with others Toys and props that can be used in more than one place increase the opportunities for play and make the center more interesting and fun. Some examples are loose parts like small planks and sawhorses that can add to and change permanent play units.

ADD VARIETY BY CREATING DIFFERENT LEVELS

Different levels can increase variety and interest in a room or play yard. A carpeted platform makes a special place to look at books and listen to stories. The different level, carpeting and cushions help the children slow down and be more quiet in that area. If your windows are just a bit too high for the children, a platform placed next to a window helps. The children can then have a view to the outside. If you are planning to add a playhouse to your room, consider building it on two levels. Furnish the first level as a kitchen, the second as a bedroom. Outdoors add a new level and activity with some old bedsprings and a piece of plywood. Drill holes in the plywood so you can tie it to the bedsprings. Glue some carpet scraps to the top. Stand back while the children walk, run and jump here.

Think of all the levels that add variety to indoor and outdoor spaces:

cushions
platforms
tires
ramps
bridges
drain pipes
play units
benches
slides
climbing trees
stairs
pits
rocks
logs
small hills
climbers
play units
window seats

Low ceilings are more inviting than high ceilings. Fish net, fabric or old parachutes can be draped the full length of a room which has high ceilings. Fabric absorbs sound, as well as adding interest and softness to a room.

USE COLOR AND LIGHTING TO CREATE MOODS

Color and lighting can be used to great advantage to make the center a more comfortable, cheery place. It helps if you know how colors affect people. To most people the warm colors like red, orange and yellow are exciting. The cool colors like blue, green and purple are relaxing. When choosing colors, try relaxing colors like blue or light green in quiet areas such as the book corner. Orange and the bright colors are better in active play areas or as a decoration in the entry. Large rooms look smaller if you paint the walls or part of each wall a different color or shade of the same color. Neutral colors for shelves are best so toys are easy to see. A red toy on a red shelf is hard to see. Lighting, too, can be used to feature an area or activity. Hanging a lamp over the reading area varies the lighting in the room and sets that area off as special.

Here are some ways to vary the color and lighting in your room:

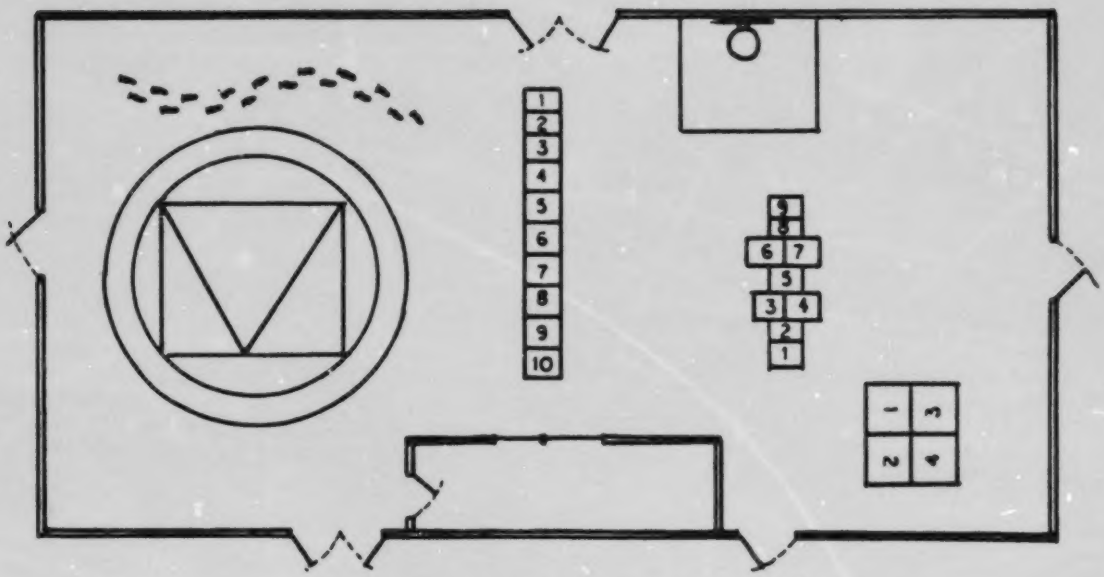
Add a splash of color. Posters or large sheets of colored paper may help when you cannot paint. Once again, get down on your knees when hanging decorations so they are at child's eye level.

Turn off the lights. If your room has flourescent lights, choose times like during snack or a group movement activity to turn off the lights. Removing the glare of the lights helps change the mood.

Choose simple colors and decorations. Color and decorations add a nice touch, but avoid too much of either. Have some quiet, plain walls. Choose simple colors. The confusion of too much color and too many things to look at can over-excite some children.

Find an artist. Check with your director to find expert help from local colleges, your community or installation. You may find someone who will help you plan graphics, murals or color schemes for your center. You may even find volunteers to do the painting.

One center had a problem with wide, open space. The center had a nice, large indoor playroom but no money for equipment. Everyday when the children came into the playroom, they raced wildly from one end to the other no matter how much the caregivers called out, "Slow down!" The children had many accidents, running into each other often. The dangers in this area were reduced quickly and easily with a few gallons of paint. The children took the signal from the patterns on the floor. They found more to do than just run around. The number of accidents was immediately reduced. The drawing below shows the designs that were painted on the playroom floor.



Many child care centers using converted buildings have the advantage of enough room for large indoor play spaces for active play.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TEXTURES

Soft things often are hard to find in a child care center. In general, soft things covered with fabric require more care and cleaning than easy-care plastic, formica or linoleum. However, children need to have comfy, cozy spaces and soft playthings in their environment. Check the health rules for your center. Then be alert to things you can do to make the center a softer place to be. For example, if there are no animals to hold, make sure a child can find other soft things. These might include sitting in a caregiver's lap, using finger paints, molding play dough, digging in dirt or playing in sand or water.

Think of all the ways you can to add softness and variety to textures in your center:

Use carpeting in creative ways. Use carpeting, rug scraps and carpet samples wherever you can. Some areas of the room definitely require more softness than others. Cover the inside and outside of a packing barrel with carpeting to make a soft, private space for a child. Put carpeting on walls, ramps, platforms and boxes.

Let fabrics soften various areas. Fabrics can add color, help absorb sound and soften the center environment. Curtains may dress up a window, as well as help control the natural light. If you have a playhouse, don't overlook the possibility of hanging curtains in it.

Make use of nature's soft textures. Look for soft surfaces to use outside. These include grass, sand, dirt, water, straw and sawdust. If your play yard is sadly lacking any of these, look for ways to take your children to places where these soft surfaces are more available.

PUT LIVING THINGS IN THE ENVIRONMENT

Living things - plants, animals and fish - will add interest and beauty to your center. Put houseplants in different parts of the room. Rules regarding the keeping of animals vary from center to center. Check with your director. If permitted, small animals like rabbits, gerbils, guinea pigs and hamsters make good room pets. A fenced area in the play yard for small animals allows for lots of contact between the children and animals. With plants and animals, children learn about caring for other living things. Animals must be fed daily and plants watered weekly. Most important of all they gain some understanding of the life cycles of different plants and animals. Of course, you will have to see that the children learn to be humane and gentle. Be sure that things do not get dropped into the fish tank or plants are not uprooted. With space set aside for plants you can show how they get their beginnings. Some start from cuttings, some from seeds and others from bulbs. Find a place for a small garden plot outdoors. Radishes, lettuce and other vegetables and flowers will grow in tubs or sandboxes just as well as in the ground.

Here are some ways to make the center environment more alive with plants and animals:

Houseplants Hang plants with ropes and small pulleys. The children can help you lower and water them. Put plants on shelves and windowsills. Make terrariums or gardens in jars with the children. Some houseplants are poisonous. Be sure to decorate with those that are not.

Sprouts Seeds like alfalfa, radish, mung bean or garbanzo bean are easy to sprout. These sprouts can be used later in a cooking activity or for making salads.

Insect farms Toy stores and mail order catalogs sell ant farms. Worm farms are easy to make. Put some soil and worms in a glass container. Cover the sides of the container with paper. Remove the paper from time to time and you should be able to see the worms at work.

Visitors bringing animals If regulations prevent you from keeping animals in the center, invite parents, humane society workers or zookeepers to bring small animals for short visits.

CHECK YOUR CENTER FOR SOFTNESS AND FLEXIBILITY

Check your center's indoor and outdoor space. Score one point for each item you check on the list below.

SOFTNESS

___ rocker
___ stuffed chair
___ lawn swing
___ bean bag chair
___ large carpet or rug
___ floor cushions
___ grass
___ sandbox or sand area
___ soft animals to hold
___ soft seats on swings
___ finger paints
___ clay or play dough
___ mud
___ water added to sand
___ "laps"
___ dirt for digging*

FLEXIBILITY

___ Playthings can be used by more than one child at a time - water table, blocks, or climbers.

___ Playthings can be used in more than one way - play dough can be molded, shaped and rolled; a tunnel can be crawled into or over; blocks can be sorted by color or shape.

___ Playthings can be used in different places - eggbeaters in the pretend area, at the water table or when cooking.

___ Equipment can be moved by the children - boxes, blocks or tires.

___ Spaces can be made different sizes - tables, shelves or equipment can be moved to make a space smaller or larger.

___ There are different levels or surfaces for play - puzzles can be on the floor or a table; paint at an easel or on the floor.

___ TOTAL POINTS

18-22 Keep up the good work!
10-17 There's some room for changes that will improve your center's liveability.
0-9 Look for ways to add or change some of the items you didn't check.

*These items are suggested in a *softness* rating taken from Elizabeth Prescott's *Assessment of Child-Rearing Environments: An Ecological Approach*. California: Pacific Oaks College, 1975.

ADDING THE HUMAN TOUCH TO CENTER ENVIRONMENTS

PART TWO

In PART TWO you will discover:

. tips for managing the preschool environment

. ways to support the children's personal growth

. things that preschoolers can and like to do

. some creative ways to use materials

. some suggested resources

MANAGING PRESCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS WITH CARE

PLAN YOUR OWN ROLE

It may help you to plan for each day if you think about how much or how little you will have to direct different kinds of activities. Some activities call for more direction from you than others. There are times when young children can find and do things without help from an adult. You will want to plan a balance between those things which require more direction from you and those which require less. The following are four kinds of activities which might occur in a center. For *free-play* you make no plans in advance. The children are free to choose any activity in the room or yard. For *free-choice* time you plan ahead and set up several things, such as easel painting, play dough, water play or coloring pictures. The children are free to choose one of these activities. You may direct a *group activity*. like music or story time. Or you may lead the group in an *individual activity*. All the children work alone but do the same thing at the same time like pasting or cutting.

How much you direct the children changes according to the kind of activity:

Free-play This is usually a time when you give very little direction. As the children play, you may choose to watch or talk with them. Usually the adult is not involved during times of free-play.

Free-choice You may have to give the children more direction at this time because activities like painting or water play often call for close watching or direction.

Caregiver-directed activities These require the most direction from you. Often you may have to do two things at once. While you present the activity, like reading a story or telling how to paste, you also will have to deal with those few children who might choose to do something besides what you have planned.

KEEP GROUP SIZE SMALL

The total number of children grouped together in one center play area makes a big difference in the quality of the child care experience. Children in two groups of 16 with two caregivers in each group play better than one group of 32 with four caregivers. Within a group of 14 children, for example, play is improved even more when the children play in smaller sub-groups. For three, four and five year olds the best size for a group is between 14 and 20 children. The number of caregivers to children is another important factor affecting quality child care. The best care usually occurs when there is one caregiver for every seven to ten children. In these smaller groups caregivers spend more time talking to children and less time observing and supervising. In smaller groups children get along with each other and with caregivers better. They have more opportunities to talk and ask questions. Because they spend more time thinking before they act, they wander less. They spend longer periods of time playing with one thing and get more involved in tasks and activities than children in larger groups.

Look for ways to make smaller groups:

Divide the room. A center which has 30 to 40 children in one large room should divide the room. The result would be two rooms with groups just the right size. Remodeling or adding partitions are the best solutions. There are other ways to divide the room, if these aren't possible. A combination of shelves on the floor and banners or curtains hung from the ceilings can divide a large room into two smaller ones. Careful planning may be necessary for sharing bathrooms, sinks and play areas.

Use sub-groups. Another way to manage the problem of a large group is to divide it into smaller groups. One caregiver stays in the room with a group of children. Another caregiver takes a group to the indoor playroom, the library or outdoors.

Divide duties. Another solution is to have a special resource person. This person will lead various activities in a separate room. Small groups of children can leave the room for periods of music, movement or arts and crafts.

THINK ABOUT THE USE OF TIME

The use of time is an important part of the environment. A daily schedule or regular routine helps the children feel secure. They know what will come next. They want to know, for example, that everyday after outdoor play it is time to have music. After music, it is time to wash for lunch. A daily schedule helps a caregiver plan for and help the children move through each day. This is especially the case in centers that provide drop-in care. Within that regular routine allow for some give and take. Some children may need another minute or two to finish the pictures they are painting. Some days you will want to change the schedule to make time for something interesting. The children may want more time outside to watch the road crew repair the street. A special visitor may call for more time inside. It is important to have long periods of free time both inside and out. Plan for 45-60 minute blocks of time for play. Children then have time to find and play several different activities. These long periods of time help them learn to stay with one thing longer. The schedule should alternate calm, quiet activities with louder, more active ones. Keep any group time like music and stories brief. You can use group time to help the children change pace. A quiet activity before snack or lunch helps calm the children so they can enjoy their food more.

Here is a sample schedule. You will have to add to it if your center is open more hours:

0630-0815	arrival, breakfast, free-play
0815-0900	outdoor or indoor active play
0900-0945	planned activity/free-play
0945-1000	snacks
1000-1100	planned activty/free-play
1100-1130	outdoor or indoor active play
1130-1150	group time/quiet activity
1150-1200	prepare for lunch
1200-1230	lunch
1230-1430	rest/quiet time for non-nappers
1230-1430	nap time for nappers
1445-1500	clean-up/prepare for snacks
1500-1515	snack time
1515-1545	outdoor or indoor activity/free-play
1545-1645	planned activity/free-play
1645-1700	clean-up/prepare for dinner
1700-1730	quiet group activity
1730-1800	dinner

USE A THEME TO PULL THINGS TOGETHER

When you plan for preschool children, it is helpful if you use a theme. A theme may be used for a day, several days or longer. This helps make sense out of all the different pieces of the day. A theme gives meaning because it ties the activities and parts of the day together for you and the children. Once you have an idea for the theme, think about all the ways you can use that theme. Choose books to read or put in the book corner. Display pictures that illustrate your theme. Pick related songs, poems and finger plays. Change the words of a song the children already know to fit the theme. Plan snacks or a cooking experience around your theme. Make small changes in games the children already know and play. For example, counting games can be played with valentines, shamrocks, shells or toy ships. Add related props to the pretend area. Invite special visitors to your room to go with the themes you use. It is usually easy to plan art activities to fit your theme. Once you get into the habit of planning and using themes, it will be easy to find more than one activity or way to work around a theme.

Some themes you might use in your preschool room:

Families Look at different kinds and sizes of families and how they work and play.

Jobs Visitors and other activities help your children see what different jobs are - grocery clerk, firefighter, truck driver, homemaker or telephone repair person.

Holidays Besides the traditional holidays you know about, learn about the family backgrounds of your children and include any of their special holidays. Learn about the holidays from other countries or cultures so you can include them also.

Animals There are lots of ways to look at and group animals - farm, pets, zoo, fish, insects and dinosaurs, as well as animal mothers and their babies.

Transportation Look at the different ways we travel - by plane, train, boat, cars and trucks.

make
leaf
prints

rake leaves
and then
jump in them

put Indian corn
and gourds on
the science table

make applesauce
with food mill
or colander

THINGS
TO DO
IN
FALL

make
masks
for
Halloween

carve a
pumpkin

put a Fall book in
the reading area
read

TRY THIS

You hear that Case will bring her rabbit to class tomorrow. You want to make some plans to use this visit as the basis for some activities. List some things you might do around the theme of a rabbit.

.

.

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.

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Did you come up with any ideas different from those listed below? You need not do all of these things at one time. We give you lots of ideas just to show some of the many things possible.

. Teach a rabbit song you already know or make one up.

. Serve *rabbit* food at snack: carrots, celery and cabbage.

. Have the children make rabbit ears out of paper, paste on a headband and wear them.

. Include *hopping rabbits* at movement time. While the children jump, talk about *rabbit* noises, *wiggling* noses and *flicking* tails.

. Set out picture books of farm animals.

. Read from Beatrix Potter's *Tales Of Peter Rabbit*.

. Provide felt cutouts of rabbits for the flannel board.

. Set out toy farm animals or farm animal matching games.

LEARN TO MOVE EASILY FROM ONE THING TO ANOTHER

Sometimes it is hard to move from one thing to the next. Children find these times upsetting. Some do not want to stop what they are doing. Also, when a group changes activities, some children will have to wait for others. Most children and some adults find it hard to wait. However, these times need not be upsetting. With practice, caregivers can learn to have games or fun routines ready to use when it is time to change activities. Even in a drop-in child care center, the routine of a regular schedule can do much of the work for you. Those children who attend the center frequently will sense when it is time to change. Tell the new children and remind the others what will happen next. Use words such as, "After you clean-up we will go outside." Then find a fun way to get through the change.

Here are some ideas to help you make those changes from one activity to the next:

Excuse a few children at a time. If the children are in a group, they can sing, do finger plays or say rhymes. Let three or four children at a time do what is needed - go to the bathroom, get their coats or wash their hands. Pick children by colors. "All those wearing red, go wash your hands."

Do something fun while waiting. As the children finish with clean-up or come in from outside, have them sit on the rug and do finger plays or play games.

Use dramatic play to get results For going out or coming in quietly, have the children *hunt a bear* or *be a cat looking for a mouse.* Be dramatic. Whisper, "The bear will hear you. Move slowly and quietly."

Divide the caregivers and the group. With one caregiver inside and one outside, send the children in or out in small groups.

Make up songs to fit the activity. "This is the way we clean the room, clean the room, clean the room."

TRY THIS

Read the following situation. Think of a solution to the problem and compare your answer with some suggestions we got from some experienced caregivers.

You are with your group of preschool children in the indoor play room. They have been playing very actively for about 45 minutes. Suddenly Rosanna runs into Frank in the corner. Suzanne and Greta, who have been playing happily, start to run to you, first one and then the other, to "tattle" on each other. The noise level is rising. Two children start going both directions on the balance beam instead of just one way, upsetting the other children. You look at your watch. You have ten minutes to wait until time to go back to the room for lunch. What would you do? Write your answer below before you read some answers other caregivers suggest.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sally's idea "Beginning with four or five children, I'd have them line up. Each child places his hands on the shoulders of the child in front and quietly sings *choo choo, chug chug* while marching around the room. Other children would probably want to join in. The children could then move to the room this same way."

Ken's idea "I like to sing. I would call the children together and we would sing some of our favorite songs until it was time for lunch."

Ruth's idea "I would suggest to the boys on the balance beam that they sit down against the wall and take some 'time out' from play until they could rejoin the others and play well. I would take Suzanne in one hand and Greta in the other and have them walk around with me as I supervised the other children."

Sadie's idea "I have a signal I use with the children. When I blink the lights - no matter what they are doing - they all freeze. Then we take three deep breaths together. Very quietly we begin doing again just what we were doing before the lights blinked - but this time very slowly and quietly. I really ham it up and make a big deal about a *silent, slow-motion movie*. The kids are familiar with this routine and it helps. Even the new children watch the others and soon catch on to our slow-motion game."

PLAN FOR REST TIME

Preschool children have lots and lots of energy. They also need quiet-time activities. Most will need a rest period if they spend all day in the center. Some children need more rest and sleep than others. Most three year olds need a nap more than five year olds. Have rest time at the same time everyday. Have a quiet game or activity just before rest time to help the children slow down their pace. Children who are in the center everyday like to find their cot in the same place. Give the new child, or one who is not eager to rest, the job of helping you get the cots ready. At rest time it helps if you use restful behavior. Give directions with a relaxed, calm voice. Keep what you do simple. Rest time calls for routine rather than change or variety.

Here are a few hints to help you with rest time:

Try a quiet-time game. No one talks in this game. The children watch and then do what the caregiver does: touch your nose, touch your hair, shut your eyes, put your hands over your ears.

Soften the environment. Darken the room. Play soft music. Talk quietly, but firmly.

Space the children. Place cots or mats with at least three feet between each on all sides.

Give older children a book. Let them do a puzzle on their cots or mats before they put their heads down.

Provide a separate area for quiet play. Some children do not need to nap.

Sit near restless children. It may help to rub their backs gently or softly hum a tune.

Help the youngest children. It helps some to be near the caregiver they like most.

Read a good book. Try Margaret Wise Brown's *Goodnight Moon.*

KEEP RULES SIMPLE AND YOUR EYES OPEN

As a caregiver, a big part of your job is to supervise play. You can learn to prevent some accidents and difficulties before they happen. You need to make a quick check everyday to look for safety hazards and broken toys or equipment. When supervising a group of children, stand where you can see into all corners of the room or play yard. Even as you talk with just one or two children, face the direction where most of the other children are playing. Stand near any activity with an element of danger such as cooking or carpentry. Stay near large play units, climbers, swings and slides in case any child needs your help. Limit the number of children who can use a piece of equipment. Allow only as many to be on a rocking boat, for example, as is safe. Keep the safety rules simple, few in number and review them with the children often.

Some simple rules for outside play might include:

Pedal the trikes one-way.

Keep sand in the sandbox.

Play away from the swings.

Hold on with both hands on the climber.

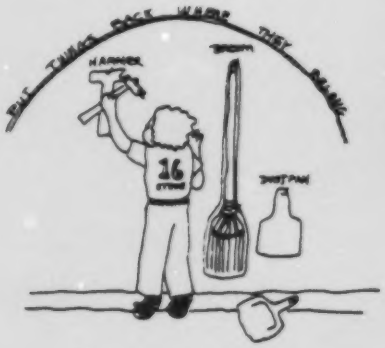
Some simple rules for inside play might include:

Blocks are for building.

Use your inside voice, please.

Put toys away when finished.

We walk inside.



PLAN A HEALTHY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Plan the play areas for safety. Arrange things so you can see into all corners. With low dividers caregivers can see into all corners easily. Indoors, check the heat and ventilation. Adjust the thermostat or open a window as needed. Plan ways to control spills from water and sand play. Use newspapers, old blankets or drop cloths. Slippery floors can be dangerous. Wipe up any spills. Children need fresh water for drinking and time and space for naps. Child-height toilets and sinks or safe-to-use step stools make toileting and handwashing routines simple and attractive for the children. Keep an eye out for hazards. Make any simple repairs you can and report other dangers to your director. Post a communicable disease chart where you and parents can see it. Protecting the children's health and safety is a big and important part of your job.

Plan a healthy and safe preschool environment:

Post emergency procedures. Know the plans to follow for fire drills, storm warnings or any emergency evacuations. Post these in clear sight.

Keep forms handy. Know how to fill our the accident report forms that are required in your center. Keep these forms where you can find them.

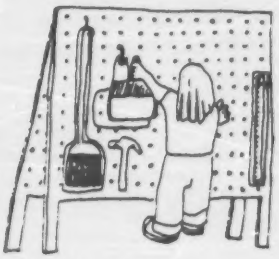
Know what to do. Know where the fire extenguishers are and how to use them. If you haven't taken a first aid course, do so or learn some basic first aid on your own. The American Red Cross has the best, most up-to-date first-aid information. A good, illustrated first-aid book for caregivers is *A Sigh Of Relief* by M. I. Green.

Make a plan to supervise play. Have a plan for each caregiver to watch a particular area or activity. If your center provides drop-in care, then each additional caregiver knows exactly what to do.

Take care with scissors. For the most part use scissors with blunt tips. When projects call for scissors with sharp tips, supervise their use with care. With some groups of children it is safe to keep scissors on open shelves, with others it is not.

ARRANGE MATERIALS IN ORDERLY WAYS

Three, four and five year olds like to do a variety of things everyday. This calls for lots of games, toys and materials. When children can find their own play, they are learning to be independent and to make choices. To allow for free choice, display toys in an attractive, orderly way. Use open shelves or storage in each area so that the children can see and reach what they want. If you do not want the children to use something, put it completely out of their sight. The puzzles, beads, pegboards, lacing cards and other toys preschoolers like have lots of bits and pieces. Good organization helps keep the material in order so that the children can find their own play.



Picture Labeling

Plan ways to arrange the materials in your room:

Containers Have a separate container for each game or toy. These can be trays, boxes with lids removed, baskets or small cloth bags.

Picture labels Mark shelves with pictures or outlines so the children can see easily where to return toys. Labels from the original package are useful to mark containers and shelves to show where they belong on the shelves. Children can learn to match a colored shape on a box with one on a shelf.

Color coding Color the back side of the puzzles with paint or marking pen. All pieces belonging together can be spotted at a glance by color.

Hooks and pegs Use pegboards and hooks to hang things like scissors, garden and woodworking tools, cooking supplies and dress-up clothes.

Special displays Sometimes children need your help to find their play. Put a few games or toys on the tables so they are easy to find and use. You can draw attention to a book, puzzle or toy by placing it by itself on a table or low shelf.

Closed storage Some children get very excited when surrounded by too many decorations or too much choice. It often is best to keep decorations simple and reduce the number of choices. You can keep some things out of sight in storage. Put some back into the room and remove others.

BE FLEXIBLE IF YOUR CENTER PROVIDES DROP-IN CARE

Some centers provide drop-in care. No advance reservations are required. Parents may walk into the center at any time bringing their child or children for any number of hours. If your center provides drop-in care, you still will find the ideas in this book useful and practical. They have been tried in a center that provides drop-in care for a large number of children. You just have to be somewhat more flexible and able to change your plans as enrollment changes. If, for example, attendance is high, you may choose to set up an obstacle course for active-play. With fewer children you might have a free-play period. Knowing attendance trends may be helpful for planning. You will want to plan activities that take more supervision, like carpentry or cooking, when attendance is low. Your director may be able to share attendance information with you. In military child care centers, for example, attendance is always high on payday.

Here are some tips to help you meet the challenge of drop-in child care:

Name tags help. Call each child by name whenever possible. With masking tape and a marking pen you can make name tags quickly.

A game may help. Games that show how things disappear and then reappear may help a child who is anxious about a parent returning. As a child drops clothespins into a container, you can talk about how the clothespins "have gone." Dumping them out, say, "They've returned - so will your mother."

Have lots of visitors. Field trips away from the center can be difficult to plan with children arriving and leaving at all times of the day. Instead of taking the children out, invite visitors like firefighters to come to the center.

Have a plan for supervising. As more children arrive, another caregiver will be called into your room. It is good to have a plan so all caregivers know what areas or activities they are to supervise.

Keep track of the children. An easy check-in and check-out system is necessary in your room. You will see one idea for such a system as you turn the page.

KEEP TRACK OF THE CHILDREN AS THEY COME AND GO

A center which provides drop-in care needs an easy method to keep track of the children. The *official* entry and exit records, health cards, emergency phone numbers and fees charged usually are maintained elsewhere in the child care center. It is important for you to have a system *in your own room* for keeping track of the children as they come and go. As the number of children in your room increases, you will need additional caregivers. As each new caregiver arrives or when shifts change, caregivers need quick and easy access to information about the children in the room. A chart like the one shown on the next page tells you at a glance how many children are in the room so you can make certain that the numbers of caregivers in the room is adequate for the number of children present. The number and names of the children are important for emergency evacuations, such as fire drills or storm alerts.

Name and location After each name is a narrow column used if the child is out of the room. When parents arrive, they can find their child quickly and easily on the playground or in the library.

Meals You can see at a glance the meals to be served to each child. A check means the child will eat a center-prepared meal and an "s" indicates a sack meal from home.

School Some children may leave the center to attend preschool or kindergarten elsewhere. A check in this column helps you remember to get each child ready to leave in time.

Nap Not all preschoolers require a nap. A check in the column tells you who will nap each day.

Return time You may find it helpful to know an approximate time when parents will return. For instance, if many parents will be picking up their children at 4:30 p.m., plan an activity that permits easy exit like games or a story time.

Remarks A caregiver's shift may begin after some children have already arrived or end before parents arrive. Caregivers can note allergies or helpful information parents share with them.

Below is a sample room chart used in a preschool room in a military child care center for children receiving drop-in care. You may want to copy or change it to suit your own needs. This chart is on heavy cardboard and covered with acetate or plastic. This way caregivers can write with wax marking pencils or washable felt tip pens and use the same chart again and again. The children's names are written in as they arrive and erased as they leave. There may be additional information which you may want or need in your particular room. You might find it helpful to know the arrival time for each child. This way all caregivers will know the length of time a child has been in the room.

A SAMPLE DAILY CHART FOR A PRESCHOOL ROOM

Name		Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	School	Nap	Time Return	Remarks
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								
6.								
7.								
8.								
9.								
10.								
11.								
12.								
13.								
14.								
15.								
16.								
17.								
18.								
19.								
20.								

"O" outdoors "P" playroom "L" library "F" fieldtrip

CHECK YOUR PRESCHOOL AREA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Use the checklist below to help you look at and think about how your preschool environment is managed. Think about ways to improve the management of your room for any items you do not check.

____ daily schedule includes a balance of free-play, free-choice and caregiver-directed activities

____ normal groups include no more than 14 to 20 preschoolers

____ regular schedule for routines and activities

____ written ____ posted in the room

____ established routines help caregivers and children move from one activity to the next

____ arrangements help children and caregivers keep materials in order

____ separate areas for activities

____ open shelves for storage in each area

____ color coding

____ picture labeling

____ boxes, trays, bags for toys

____ hooks and pegboards

____ children share in clean-up

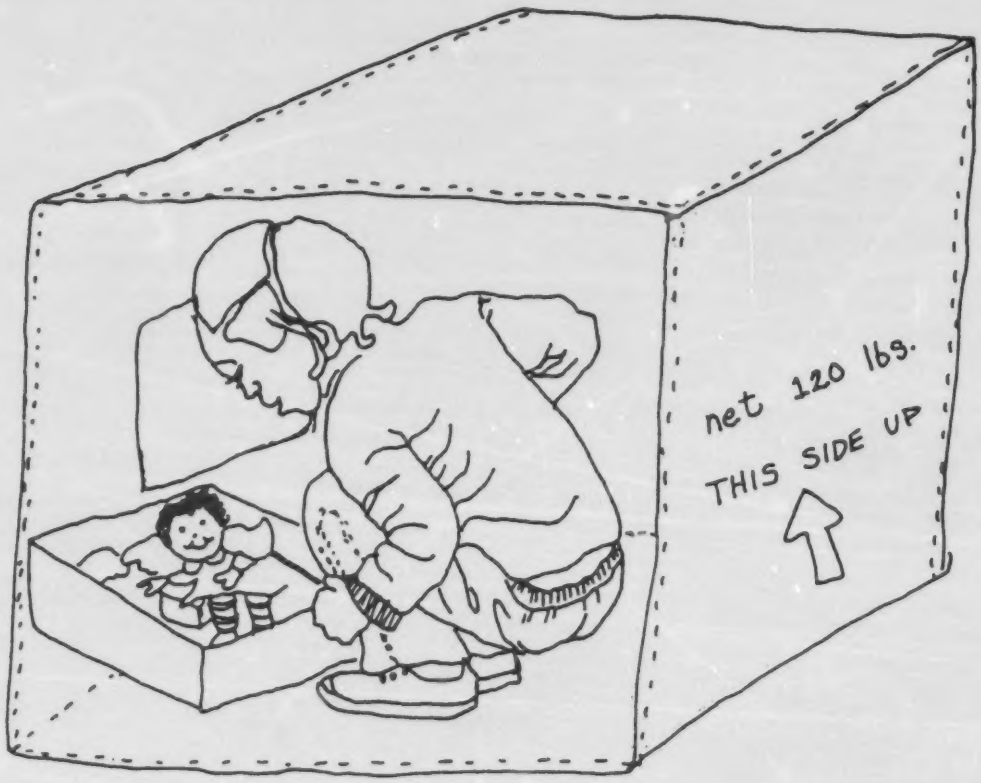
____ variety of activities planned around one theme

____ caregivers know and follow all routines to keep children safe and healthy

____ rest and nap routines followed daily

____ easy check-in and check-out system for drop-in care

SUPPORTING AND RESPECTING DIFFERENCES



HELP CHILDREN LIKE THEMSELVES

Children who feel good about themselves are happy, play well, like to try new things and are open to meeting new people. We can arrange the environment to help preschoolers feel important and loved. Whenever possible, each child should have a cubby or space for his or her things. Also, child-size private areas which adults cannot fit into tell the children we respect them. These can be in a corner, a playhouse or on a raised platform. Caregivers can help, too. Call each child by name whenever possible. Name tags help. Make them with tape and a marking pen. Plan activities the children like and can do successfully. Give praise with smiles, handshakes, hugs and pats. Squat, kneel, and sit on low chairs or the floor so you can look a child in the eye frequently. You can plan special activities like drawing *A picture of me* that will help the children think about and accept differences in both themselves and others.

Here are some ways to help children feel special:

Cubbies If your room does not have built-in cubbies, look for substitutes like ice-cream cartons or shoe boxes. A parent group might like to help design and make cubbies for your room.

Mirrors Have shatterproof full-length and hand mirrors in your room. A mirror near the dress-up clothes is fun.

"A picture of me" Trace around each child on a large piece of paper. Let the children add details with paint, crayons and bits of fabric.

Tape recorders and cameras With a recorder, tape each child's voice. Play it back and let the children guess who is speaking. Take pictures of the children. Display the photographs on a bulletin board or in a group photo album.

Birthdays Do something special for each child's birthday. Make a paper crown and turn snack time into a "party" with a candle and songs. Let the birthday child bring someone or something special to show or share.

SHOW CHILDREN HOW TO GET ALONG WITH EACH OTHER

How to get along with other children and adults is an important skill for preschoolers to practice and learn. Equipment and materials like phones and climbing toys encourage the children to play together. For some children in your center this may be their first experience with large groups of children. You will have to help some learn ways to share, take turns, respect the rights of others and use kind words. Children learn a lot by watching others, especially adults. For this reason, you should be a kind, considerate friend to each child. You can call attention to friendly acts when you say things like, "That was nice of you to help your friend Arnold zip his coat." Preschoolers are just beginning to learn that other people and things have feelings, too. If a child is squeezing a guinea pig too tightly, you might say, "I think Florence is crying because you are holding her too tightly. You are hurting her. You need to be gentle."

You can use equipment and plan activities to help children learn to get along:

Provide things which encourage children to play together. Make available dress-up clothes, balls, playhouse, blocks, sandbox, and water table.

Use books which talk about feelings and friendly acts. Some examples are *The Little Brute Family* by Tana Hoban, *A Friend Is Someone Who Likes You* by Joan Walsh Anglund and *The Quarreling Book* by Charlotte Zolotow.

Have older preschoolers pretend or act out events that people do together. Let them pretend to build a house. Some can hold the boards. Some can use hammers and others use saws. Some can serve refreshments. This pretend sharing paves the way for real-life experiences.

Use puppets or flannel board stories. Choose stories that show acts of friendship or people or animals working together.

CONSIDER MILITARY LIFE-STYLES

Children in military families share a particular life-style. Most children with servicemember parents live away from close relatives, move frequently, may be separated from a parent on duty, are exposed to a wide range of cultural differences, and may have to face the death of a parent. The child care center on a military installation can be an important family and child support service. The children feel more secure when the center reflects their lives. Besides photographs of the children in the center, display pictures from the local military newspaper. Then children can talk about and begin to understand what their parents and other adults do. Caregivers can give brief explanations and bring up discussions about the words the children hear often like, "inspection," "duty,", "maneuvers," and "fatigues." The center environment should help the children adjust to the special demands of military life.

Think of ways to help a child adjust to a change:

Make moving easier. You can write letters or make a tape for the child who is moving away. Take a photo of your preschool group to send with the child who is leaving. Play a game like "Moving On," which is described on page 88, to help children talk about how it feels to move. Books with stories and pictures about moving may help the children. Look for titles like *Hello-Goodbye* by Sue Felt, *I'm Moving* by Martha Hickman, *Janey* by Charlotte Zolotow or *Stevi* by John Steptoe. Put a toy moving van in the block area or a suitcase in the pretend area for playing moving games.

Be patient with language learning. A child may arrive who speaks a language other than English. Be patient. Childhood is the time of naturally learning language. Children learn a second language with more ease than adults. Take time to name things that are important to the child like toys, clothes and food.

Offer a comforting environment. Be an understanding listener. Use comforting words and lots of touch to help children through a difficult time. Make sure there are soft, cozy places for a child who wants to just sit sometimes.

SHARE EXPERIENCES AND DIFFERENCES

Activities and experiences with human differences belong in the preschool room. The more different views of life that young children can learn about, the more they will be open to differences when they grow up. The world which children are growing into will be served best by adults who like and respect themselves as well as others with different skin colors, habits, customs and clothing. The easiest way for children to learn about differences is to play with children and caregivers from different family backgrounds. If your culture is different from that of any of your children, you can share the songs, food and stories you liked as a child. There is more you can do. Remember, the way preschool children learn about different cultures is the same as they learn about everything else. They need as much direct experience as possible. Choose things that are interesting and familiar to children like food, clothing, families, songs, games, holidays and festivals.

Plan carefully to share different customs with children:

Involve real people. Whenever possible, invite parents to share their own cultural past. A good way to start is have them share food they prepare or help the children prepare. They can talk about customs, clothing, school, and arts and crafts from their own childhood.

Give honest information. Try to give the most realistic, honest picture of a culture that you can. You will need to remember there may be many regional differences within one country. All of Africa, for example, does not share the same culture. Life-styles and tribes as different as the Masai and Pygmy exist in each region. We have found that books in the children's section of the library often provide detailed, real information and good illustrations.

Choose books and pictures carefully. Be careful not to use books, songs, or pictures which present a false view of a culture. For example, because it rains so much in the Pacific Northwest, Indians from that region did not use or wear feathers like Indians who lived in the dry climate of the plains.

BRING IN PEOPLE FROM THE WORLD OUTSIDE

No matter how hard you try, you cannot be all things to all of the children in your room. Since children learn about adult behavior from adults, the more grown-ups they can be around, the better. When children are around a lot of different people, they see the different things adults do and the different ways they behave. From these experiences, children can pick and choose grown-ups to copy as they grow toward adulthood themselves. To help the children, as well as to add interest and variety to the environment, plan to invite other people to visit either on an occasional or regular basis. Your director may help you find and invite interesting guests. Remember, successful visits require careful planning. Just be certain your visitors know the ages and interests of preschool children. Visitors who have objects or pictures to show or things for the children to do are usually the most successful.

Some people that you might want to add to your preschool center environment include:

Men Since most caregivers are female, children like the novelty of having a man around.

People of different ages Whenever possible have children younger than three or older than five years of age. A group of preschoolers in one center were delighted to have a group of teenagers come in and demonstrate the latest dance steps. Elderly men and women, as well as babies, make interesting visitors.

People with different jobs Preschoolers like to copy adult roles. They like to meet people who have different jobs like firefighters, farmers, poets, musicians, military police, TV personalities and clowns.

LEARN TO TALK ABOUT SENSITIVE SUBJECTS

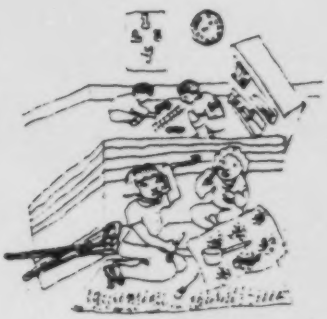
Sometimes it seems easiest just to ignore a touchy subject. Some caregivers simply avoid talking about subjects like death, divorce or sex exploration. It may be easier to find the right words to use with children if you first take a look at your own feelings. Your own beliefs and personal style will shape how you react. For example, to help children deal with their feelings about death, they must first understand what death is. They must realize that the dead insect found in the play yard will never move again. In an attempt to understand any subject, a child may ask the same questions over and over. Just be patient and repeat the same answers. Honest answers are always best.

Expect curiosity. Children under five may dig up a buried pet again and again to see if it is still dead. This may bother you, but the children clearly see that death is final. You may find children in a corner or behind bushes, looking at or touching each other's bodies. Open toileting where the boys and girls use the same bathroom is designed to help preschoolers openly satisfy their curiosity about sex differences. Children may ask questions like "Why doesn't Randy have a Daddy?" These are best answered with a few simple words. "He still has a daddy, but his mommy and daddy don't live together anymore."

Books may help. Books about death are best read to one child at a time. This allows for lots of touching and physical contact. *The Dead Bird* by Margaret Wise Brown and *Cock Robin* by Barbara Conney are suitable for young children. The book *Mushy Eggs* by Florence Adams is the story of children of divorced parents. Some sex education books for children are *How Babies Are Made* by Andry C. Andrew and *Growing Up* by Karl D. Schweinitz.

Talk to parents. Children may ask questions or express their concerns about the loss of a pet or absence of a parent. Most parents will appreciate it if you tell them what you noticed the child saying or doing. Then they can help the child in their own personal way.

As an adult, you set the example and tone in your room. If you have not had much contact with people who are in one way or another different, you may feel awkward at first around a disabled child. If you fear, dislike or pity such a child, you cannot hide your feelings. All children, including the disabled, can tell how you feel about them according to how you touch, look at or talk to them. At first you may be uncomfortable caring for a disabled child. Over time as you learn more about the child, you will find that what you thought to be an impossible job is one with real rewards. Hearing a three-year-old child utter her first word due to being with you and the other children is a big reward. Watching other children learn to understand, accept and help a special child might be another. There is much you will learn from these children. The ideas you had before may prove untrue and you may learn new ways of thinking about children with handicapping conditions.



Role-playing may help. To help the children understand how another feels, you may want to set up some role-playing activities. Five-year-old children like these activities. Let them explore visual impairment by using blindfolds while they reach in a bag and identify objects by touch rather than sight. They can make glasses with pipe cleaners, construction paper and colored cellophane to impair their sight. To learn about physical disabilities, they can use wheelchairs and crutches. They can tie a block to a shoe and try walking and running off balance. They can do a project with one arm in a sling. To learn about hearing impairment, they can play a lip-reading-only version of *Mother May I?* They can watch TV or a movie with the sound off.

Read books and talk about them. There are many books you can use to help children understand disabilities. Most five year olds like the biography of Helen Keller. Other children's books are available, such as *My Brother Is Retarded* by Harriet Sobol and *One Little Girl* by Joan Fassler.

PREPARE TO HELP CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

More and more children with disabilities are becoming a part of the regular, mainstream of life. This means you must be prepared to care for children with special needs who may come to your center. Remember, these children are no different from other preschoolers. They need a safe environment where they can exercise their bodies and use their minds and learn how to get along with others. The materials and activities that work with ordinary children work with special children. All you have to do is give some thought to how you will use these things. For preschool children this means lots of things to touch, see, hear, taste and smell, as well as lots of opportunity for movement.

Make small changes in the physical environment. When you make small changes in your center, it tells both a particular child and the other children that you care about and accept the child.

Hearing-impaired: For children with a hearing loss, use visual clues like maps or signs. For example, if four children can play in the block area, put up a photograph or outline drawing of four children, along with the number four.

Visually-impaired: For children who have poor eyesight, keep the room arrangement the same. Tape record books. Keep pathways inside and outside clear of hazards.

Physically disabled: For children in wheelchairs and crutches, have clear pathways and open spaces. If possible, include ways to exercise like chin-up bars.

Active children: Have different areas and allow for lots of movement. Allow for some activity like a walk around the building. Have a quiet, calm space to which the children can retreat as needed.

MIXED-AGE GROUPINGS OFFER ENVIRONMENTS FOR LEARNING

This book describes environments for preschool aged children. One good addition to such an environment is mixing children of different ages in the same group. To some degree, what is called mixed-age or cross-age care may happen already in your center. First thing in the morning and late in the day - those times when attendance is down - many centers mix the ages of children in one group. In those centers which separate their drop-in care from their full-time child care programs, often children of different ages are cared for in one group in the drop-in program. At present, most centers group children by age or skill level for practical reasons. It appears that more thought and study is needed to design equipment, room arrangements, materials, routines and schedules for use by children of different ages in the same group. So while this book describes environments for preschoolers we do not want you to overlook thinking about the benefits of mixed-age group care for children.

Below are some of the benefits of caring for children of different ages in the same group:

The younger children learn from the older. By watching and imitating the older children, the young learn new games, activities and ways to play; new words and ways to think; and new behaviors for getting along with other people. The young child can see what lies ahead by watching the older children.

The older children learn from the younger. When older children are around younger children they learn patience. When older children have an opportunity to be around younger children, they can learn and practice some of the caring skills they will need later as parents. The older child can understand the stages he's gone through by watching the young ones.

Mixed-age groups are good for children from small families. A single child or a child with just one brother or sister nearly the same age can learn a lot being in a group of children of different ages. In this world we must get along with people of all ages. Being in a mixed-age group is good preparation for all of life.

THINK ABOUT YOUR OWN REACTIONS

What does an adult do in a room of preschool children in a child care center all day? It depends on the center, as well as upon the adult. We do know that whatever a caregiver does in a child care center, young children rely a great deal on adults for direction, attention and approval. Children tend to model their behaviors after that of adults around them. If they hear kind words, children are more likely to be kind. If they hear harsh words, they may copy them, as well. In studies of child care centers, caregivers have been found to behave in different ways with young children. Some qualities promote healthy development more than others.

Most caregiver behavior includes some of the following qualities:

Encouraging The caregiver helps children express their own ideas and adds to their own selection of activities. You also increase the children's knowledge of social and physical skills, responsibility, and understanding of the world.

Guiding The caregiver helps children understand their world and different ways of doing and seeing things.

Restricting The caregiver makes it clear to children, without shaming them, that there are rules or limits which much be respected.

Neutral The caregiver tries to give information or express an opinion, but does not try to influence the child.

Which kinds of behavior do you find yourself using most? If you find that you spend most of your time correcting *or* restricting *children, you may want to find some new ways to use the environment so that you can* encourage *and* guide *more often.*

CHECK THE WAYS YOU SUPPORT DIFFERENCES

Use the checklist below to help you look at how you plan and arrange the environment to support and encourage differences.

Plan for each child.

You can tell if you are supporting and encouraging differences if you can think of a child for whom you've planned:

____ activities to fit a special interest in music, movement, block building or the like.

____ an activity or way to help a child who has a particular need to learn a new skill or develop muscles through play.

____ activities related to a special event or the mood of the day, such as a grasshopper found in the play yard or a sudden rainstorm.

Respect each child.

You can tell if you respect each child if you:

____ like each child for what he or she is instead of what he or she can do.

____ expect each child to progress from one stage to the next instead of comparing one child to another.

____ overlook those things which you may not like, such as children who whine or who have dirty hands and faces.

____ plan the center environment to include things like mirrors and birthday calendars.

Encourage differences.

____ know about each child's family - brothers and sisters, single parent, grandparents.

____ know which children have another culture, have lived in other countries, or speak another language.

____ include books and pictures and plan activities to reflect a variety of cultures and life-styles.

____ know which holidays are important to each child and how they are celebrated at home.

ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PLAY

UNDERSTAND YOUR PRESCHOOLERS

With children of three, four and five years of age in one room, you will find a wide range of sizes, skills and abilities. All children grow through the same stages, but no one child ever grows exactly like another. A three year old may be able to work a puzzle or talk as well as any four or five year old. A real advantage of having children of these different ages together is that they can learn a great deal from each other.

It may help to plan activities for these children if you know a little about them:

Preschool children are trying to move from dependent to independent behavior. They become independent as they learn to cut, paste, zip, button and tie. While choosing colors for painting, wood for building, games for playing or blocks for stacking they learn to solve their own problems and make their own decisions.

Preschool children use their senses to learn. They must have things to see, touch or do. They should be free to move about and choose those things they like to do which allow them to use their senses and move their bodies.

Preschool children need to talk and listen. New experiences give the children something to talk about, as well as new words. Plan for lots of different things to do. Answer their questions with real information even if you have to find the answer in a book yourself.

Preschool children need to repeat to learn. For this reason, it is wise to let children do an activity as often as they choose. Plan to repeat the same thing in different ways. For practice with buttoning you might have doll clothes with buttons. The children can help each other button their coats. They can button eyes, a nose and mouth onto a felt pumpkin. Finally, they will button their own clothes.

Preschool children do not think like adults. Pretend play helps them learn about their feelings and ideas. They act out events in their own lives as well as imagine what it might be like to drive a car, fly a jet or rock a baby.

KNOW WHAT SKILLS TO EXPECT FROM A PRESCHOOLER

Below are some of the different skills you can expect to see in preschoolers. Remember: EACH CHILD GROWS AT HIS OR HER OWN RATE. The items listed are averages or norms, not rules for each stage of development. We list the skills you may expect to see in your youngest and oldest children. This will give you some idea of the wide range of skills to expect in any group of three, four and five year olds.

At 3 years the preschooler:	At 5 years the preschooler:
ACTIVE PLAY	
____ may be awkward in running, turning corners, etc.	____ runs, walks, turns corners with ease
____ throws and catches with some difficulty	____ throws and catches with ease
____ rides tricycle well	____ is learning to ride two-wheeled bike
____ gallops	____ skips
____ walks on a line	____ walks on a balance beam
____ hops in one place	____ can hop 2-3 yards
FINGER AND HAND SKILLS	
____ has moderate interest in drawing	____ will draw and color endlessly
____ may scribble, then names pictures	____ plans, then draws simple picture
____ mostly scribbles	____ is learning to print name and some numbers
____ uses either hand	____ shows strong preference for right or left hand
____ uses clay to roll balls, snakes, cookies	____ makes and names objects with clay
SELF HELP SKILLS	
____ usually will need a nap	____ is outgrowing need for a nap
____ dresses and undresses self, may confuse front and back	____ dresses independently, for the most part
____ can button, snap and zip	____ is learning to tie shoelaces
____ may have occasional potty accidents	____ very independent toileting, including wiping
____ knows last name	____ may know telephone number and address

At 3 years the preschooler:

At 5 years the preschooler:

SOCIAL AND PLAY SKILLS

___ is just learning to share

___ likes to play beside as much as with other children

___ is beginning to use make-believe in play

___ combines toys like blocks and cars

___ helps put toys away

___ pays little attention to sex and sex differences

___ likes to play in groups

___ is learning to make friends

___ likes dressing up and pretend play

___ plans complicated block structures

___ able to put own toys away

___ is gaining awareness of his or her sex and sex differences

LANGUAGE AND THINKING

___ average vocabulary of 1,000 words

___ likes short, easily-completed activities

___ can name one color, usually red

___ knows phrases to songs

___ listens to short, simple stories

___ little sense of time

___ average vocabulary of 2,200 words

___ can continue project for more than one day

___ can name four or more colors

___ can sing several verses to song

___ can retell stories

___ understands "yesterday" and "tomorrow"

KEEP TRACK OF PRESCHOOLERS' DEVELOPMENT

Children grow at different rates. Because a child cannot do just one thing that is normal for a particular age is no cause for alarm. A child just may need more time and practice to develop a skill. There is some danger in expecting children to match developmental charts exactly. On the other hand, it is helpful to have a general idea what most children can do and how they behave at a certain age. This way you can detect possible problems. The sooner some difficulties are discovered the more easily they are remedied. Inform your director if you observe a child with several unusual behaviors or who cannot perform a number of the usual skills.

One of the items below by itself may not indicate a problem. Two or more of these occurring often may indicate a child is in need of special help if he:

Has difficulty hearing does not turn head or move towards loud or unusual sounds; does not come when called by name to snack or favorite activity; pulls on ear;

Has repetitious movements rocks body, claps hands or taps toys or own body for long period of time;

Is physically inactive does not actively walk, run, jump, crawl and explore;

Seems uncomfortable or unhappy often cries often or seems uncomfortable or unhappy more often than comfortable or happy;

Has trouble seeing tilts head or holds head forward; holds toys close to eyes; squints, or rubs eyes often;

Has unusual skin unusual skin color, sores or skin irritations, puffy or red-rimmed eyes;

Seldom tries to talk is three or older and uses little or no speech or does not play pretend games;

Has adjustment problems is unable to play for very long without crying, hitting, biting or yelling.

TRY THIS

How would you explain to an interested five year old how to tie a shoe? Take a few minutes and jot down the actual words you would use to explain tying a shoe.

Step 1 _____

_____

Step 2 _____

_____

Step 3 _____

_____

Step 4 _____

_____

Step 5 _____

_____

Learning to think through and plan the steps involved in doing something helps teach skills to children with handicapping conditions.

BREAK SKILLS AND INFORMATION INTO SMALL PARTS

When you want to teach children a new skill or information, it helps if you can simplify what you present. It is easier for children to learn just one thing at a time. This method of breaking skills and information into small parts is especially good to use with young children or those with one or more problems learning. The way to break a task into small parts is to perform the task yourself or watch someone else. Then look for each different step. You may have to repeat the process several times before you can decide exactly upon each step. When you teach a skill begin with the easiest step first and work backwards until the skill is learned. To teach how to tie a shoelace, the easiest and first step is to show how to untie a bow. The next step is unlacing and lacing. Once these skills are taught, you are ready to begin to show how to begin tying a bow. The way to break information into small parts is to separate all the parts or steps so that you show or teach only one thing at a time.

Here are some examples to show you how to break skills and information into small parts:

The steps needed to tie a shoelace include:

untying the bow
unlacing and lacing
finding and holding each lace
crossing the laces
pulling a lace through to make a half-knot
forming a bow
making a loop
pulling the bow through the loop
pulling the bow tight

With a set of six pictures you can show and talk about the life cycle of a bird:

adults building a nest
adults laying eggs
adults sitting on eggs
adults feeding babies
adults teaching babies to fly
babies flying away to become adults

PICK FLEXIBLE GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

You will want to present a wide variety of games and activities to the children in your room. You can learn how to choose those which will be more successful and fun for your children. When you present activities, allow for choice. Not all children will be interested in what you present at exactly that moment. When that happens you can say, "Daren, you may play with the blocks or work with the puzzles now." Besides having lots of activities in the room, you will find it helpful to know a variety of games to play with one child or a group. Then you can play games while waiting for others to be finished. Besides being fun, games help children learn new words and concepts, how to follow directions and how to take turns.

When you choose games and activities for preschool children, look for those which:

Allow for several different kinds of participation. Some can paint with a brush, others with a string.

Allow for different levels of skill. Some may cut paper shapes and paste them. Some simply may paste shapes which you've cut in advance.

Allow for different lengths of time. Some may spend just a few minutes stacking blocks while others play much longer.

Allow for growth and learning. Children like a little challenge. Plan activities that involve one new step, idea or skill.

Provide for enjoyment and success. Children feel defeated by activities which are too difficult. Children get no satisfaction from those that are too easy.

Make it easy to come and go. In centers which provide drop-in care activities that are easy to enter and leave at any time are the best.

DEVELOP THEIR SENSES FIRST

Children use their senses to learn. They base their understanding of the world on the experiences they have and the information they take in through their senses. They learn what *hard* means when they fall on cement. They learn the meaning of *small* by seeing, handling and talking about small blocks, beads or balls. All future learning is based on how well children learn to use their senses for gathering information. The best activities and experiences for preschool children involve real things, objects and pictures - things children can see, touch, smell, taste and hear.

Here are some ways to help children develop their senses:

Sight Point out and teach children the names of colors. Use matching and sorting games to help children learn to use their eyes to look for small details and information.

Touch Use a variety of rough and smooth fabrics to make matching games or texture books. Play a feeling game. Have children reach in a bag and name the objects they touch. Talk about textures as they occur in the environment: "The rabbit's fur is soft. The slide is slick."

Smell Children have a sensitive sense of smell. Help them label odors. Talk about how food at snack or mealtime smells. During a cooking activity have them smell the vanilla or the cinnamon.

Taste Whenever the children have something to eat, you can talk about how things taste. Most children like to play tasting games. They close their eyes and taste a raisin or cracker and tell you which is sweet or which is salty.

Hearing Play listening games. Have the children close their eyes and tell you if you are ringing a bell, tearing paper or pouring water. Add other sounds they know. Have the children be very quiet, close their eyes and listen. Ask, "Can you hear any sounds in the room? Your own breathing? Be real quiet. What sounds from outside can you hear?" Let the children listen to their own and others' heartbeats with a stethoscope.

REPEAT THINGS IN THE SAME AND DIFFERENT WAYS

Children learn through their experiences. Usually, they need more than one experience with something to learn about it. This is why they are so fond of repeating things. They also like the same thing repeated in different ways. Caregivers can help preschoolers learn without boring them. The trick is to present the same thing in a variety of ways. You can teach the names of colors in many different ways. Just remember that children can match colors before they can name them. So begin with matching colors in clothing with words like, "I see you have a red shirt. Who else is wearing red?" Children can play matching games with colored beads, blocks or buttons. Match and name colors while using crayons, paint or colored paper. Sing color songs while the children hold up the matching color cards. Play movement games. The children jump from one colored square to another on the floor. Use water and a few drops of food coloring to show colors and color mixing.

Here is another example of how to repeat the same thing in different ways while teaching names for parts of the body:

Use hands and feet for art. Have the children trace around their hands and feet. Have them take off their shoes and make footprints with paint. Make thumbprint pictures.

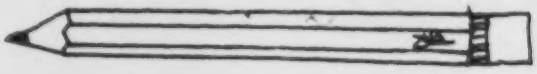
Use songs and movement. Use songs that involve touching different parts of the body like, "My head, my shoulders, my knees, my toes."

Have fun with finger plays. A finger play like "Where is thumbkin?" helps children use and name their fingers. Also, tell them words like *index finger* and *pinkie*.

Play games. With a game like "Simon Says," begin with easy words like *nose, mouth* or *head*. Later give the children new words like *waist, spine, thigh* and *ankle*.

Use books and models. Children who can name lots of body parts are ready to learn how things like the heart and lungs work. Children like books with simple pictures and models.

TRY THIS



HOW MANY USES CAN YOU FIND FOR ONE THING?

For instance, how many things can you think to do with a pencil?

Did you think of any of these?

to stir orange juice

a bridge for ants

a prop to hold a window open

to write a grocery list

to break when angry

One part of creative thinking is to be able to see usual things in unusual ways. It helps to do this if you do not judge yourself or say, "But that's silly or that won't work." Practice this skill as you read through the next section which will help you learn to plan creatively for your children.

ENCOURAGE CREATIVE THINKING

To be able to look for and accept more than one solution or answer to a question is part of creative thinking. Caregivers can practice and use this skill with preschoolers. Some questions have only one answer. To answer, "What color is this ball?" the child says, "The ball is red." Or to answer, "What do we call this animal?" the child says, "That is a chicken." A child recalls information, a label, name or past event to answer. These questions have their place. We all need to know certain facts. Questions that can have more than one answer encourage creative thinking. Caregivers need to ask more questions like, "What are some things we can do with a ball?" or "What other animals have two legs?" Caregivers can encourage creative thinking by the questions they ask. A child who learns to enjoy finding more than one answer to a question will have this skill for life.

Practice asking questions that can be answered in more than one way:

Ask questions that encourage imagination. Children can benefit from the experience of telling a story while you write it down. Instead of suggesting ideas for a story, ask questions that will lead the child to think of original answers. Begin with words like: "Tell me a story." If the child needs help getting started ask, "What's your story going to be about?" To help the child along say, "Then what happened? Then what did they do? Do you want to tell me anything else?"

Solve problems more than one way. Whenever possible, ask the children to help solve problems. Always give them enough time to think of their answers. Problems that have more than one solution might include: "It is raining outside, what can we do today? How do we show our rabbit that we love him?"

Find more than one use for things. Children often find more than one use for a thing as a natural part of their play. A block may be an iron or a cymbal. Caregivers can help children by encouraging many different uses of things that are harmless. Adults can reward new ideas with words of praise, like "That box makes a good bed for your doll."

HELP CHILDREN DEVELOP THEIR MEMORIES

As a preschool caregiver, you will want to help the children develop their memory skills. Memory is the ability to recall something out of sight or from the past. A good memory is an aid to thinking. You will want to include routines and conversations to help the children recall past events. Whenever possible, talk about past events with the children. At the end of the morning or end of the day, ask the children to tell you about their day. Ask, "Can you remember what you did today?" At first accept one answer. Other children will be able to help. One may say, "I saw Kevin playing with the blocks." With time and experience the children will be able to recall more and more. Besides talking about past events, repeat the same finger plays, songs and stories often. This way children can remember some or all of them.

Here are some memory games you can play with the children.

Concentration The children turn all the cards down and take turns in turning over two cards to see if they match. Use part of a regular deck of cards to make this game. Remove the face cards and two suits from a deck of playing cards. Or use cards from Snap or Animal Rummie to make this game.

Which One Is Missing? Take six or eight objects. While the children close their eyes, remove one object. As you do this, use a small cloth to prevent peeking. Lift the cloth and say, "One, two three. Look and see. What's missing?" The objects might include geometric shapes, colors, fruits, vegetables or toy animals.

Moving-On A child says, "I'm moving on and in my suitcase I'm taking my toothbrush with me." Each child in turn adds what he or she is taking and then repeats what has been said before. Play this game with older fours and fives.

Can You? To play this game give one simple direction and then add more to match the age and experience of each child. Use as many directions as a child can remember at one time. With a three year old you might say, "Clap your hands." With a five, "Clap your hands, hop on one foot, spin around and then sit down."

SHOW HOW THINGS ARE ALIKE OR DIFFERENT

The preschool room should have lots of games and ways for the children to compare and classify or group objects. Children need to see how things are alike or different as they group things together. Children will need this skill later to see the different forms of letters, numbers and words. As children match objects or drawings, they are learning to look for information. They learn how to focus on important details. There are different ways to classify. Children can group objects by color or shape. They can group things by use. Such a group is things used in the kitchen, like a broom, mixing bowls, refrigerator and pans. Another way to classify is by membership in a group. A screwdriver, a hammer and a saw belong to the group known as tools.

Some of the ways you can help preschool children see how things are alike or different include:

Grouping or classifying games Use buttons, beads, blocks, nuts, shells or other natural objects for sorting by color, shape or size.

Which one doesn't belong? This game involves showing four objects or pictures, one of which is different. The children have fun picking the one that doesn't belong. For example, a truck doesn't belong with a dog, a cat and a bird.

Sort toys as you put things away. Having a place for everything helps teach matching, sorting and classifying. You can encourage this by saying, "Put the red paper here and the blue paper there."

Compare objects by size. Say, "Put the *big* blocks on this shelf, the *small* ones here." Add new words as you can like *wide, narrow, thin* and *thick.*

Arrange objects in order. Nesting blocks, stacking rings and stories like "The Three Billie Goats Gruff" and "The Three Bears" show this. Show order and help explain words like *small, smaller, smallest.*

LET NUMBERS BE A PART OF THE DAY

Preschool children see and hear numbers at home, on television and in the child care center. They like numbers and want to know more about them. You can take advantage of this natural curiosity by including numbers as a regular part of the routine. You can count out loud for any number of reasons. You can count children, chairs, crackers, toys or books. You can use simple number songs and finger plays. Keep books about numbers in the room. A child who can count may not really understand the meaning of numbers. Whenever possible, let the children count objects they can see and touch. They can touch and count beads, buttons, napkins, blocks or cutouts for the flannel board. To count things or to learn other concepts or ideas that use numbers, children must understand the one-to-one relationship. *One-to-one* means one cookie for each child or one crayon on each paper.

Here are some ways to make numbers a natural part of the room:

Words and music Teach number songs or finger plays like "One two, buckle my shoe," "This Old Man," and "Five Fingers." Make up your own number songs or chants.

Games Count while the children jump rope. Bounce a ball or beat a drum. Then ask the children to clap the same number. Ask a child to hop three times.

One-to-one Ask a child to put one book on each cot for rest time, one napkin by each chair for snack or one note to take home in each cubby. Pegboards which call for putting one peg in each hole help children understand *one-to-one*.

HAVE FUN WITH NUMBERS

As you saw, children learn counting and the one-to-one relationship in a natural way. Preschoolers also can enjoy learning about money, telling time, finding shapes and measuring things. Remember, the children will have different levels of skills. One child may know her age. One may be familiar with the numbers on the clock, and one may understand that a dime is the same as ten pennies. Some will need more help than others in recognizing and naming circles, squares and triangles. If you are alert to these differences, you can help each child continue to add new information to what is already known.

Here are some ways to include math ideas as a regular part of your routine:

Money Put play money in the pretend corner. Use real coins to make matching games. Talk about the price of things. Help a child look at a dollar bill or a coin very closely. Ask, "What do you see?"

Time Have a clock with hands you and the children can move. Talk about the numbers, the long and short hands and hours and minutes. Ask, "What number does the long hand point to?"

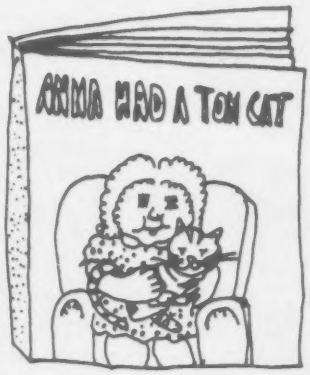
Geometric shapes Provide paper circles, squares, rectangles and triangles to paste at art time. Put large cutouts of shapes on the floor and have one child at a time hop from a square to a circle to a triangle. Play a game, asking the children to look for shapes in the room. Point to a square window. Say, "I see a square. Who else can see a square?"

Measurement Put a tape measure on the wall and have bathroom scales in the room. Make a wall chart to record the children's height and weight. Talk about the numbers as you record them. If you have inside and outside thermometers, you can talk about the temperature.

The calendar With a large calendar, a child can put a number for the date each day. Marking birthdays on the calendar will draw attention to the numbers. Talk about the days of the week and the months of the year.

TRY NEW WORDS AND NEW IDEAS

Your room should have lots of pictures, books and visitors. With each new experience, children learn and use new words. They want to learn about everything from animals, machines, insects and dinosaurs to how things work and where they come from. Use pictures, objects and the real thing to teach new words and information. The child who notices a goldfish breathing is ready to learn what gills are and how they work. Have fun with words, too. Children love rhymes. Read them rhymes. Get them to find words that rhyme. Once you share in the joy and fun that children have with words you will make a habit of using tongue twisters, jokes, rhymes and funny words with the children. The *if-then* pattern is a new idea preschoolers can learn. They must hear lots of these to learn this. "*If* you pour too fast, *then* you will spill" or "*If* you slam the door, *then* it will make a loud noise." With time children come to see that what happens now can affect what happens later. You will know they understand this when they come to you and say "*If* we clean the room, *then* can we have snack?"



Find opposites. Always use objects or pictures, real things the children can touch or see. Have fun. Say, "Kevin, walk slow. Satya, walk fast."

hard - soft *hot - cold*
light - dark *fast - slow*

Play with rhymes. Say a word and have the children give you other words that rhyme:

Man - *Jan, tan, ban*

Begin a poem and let the children add a line:

"He's real scary." - *"He's so hairy."*
"That dog is hot." - *"His name is Spot."*

Use if-then. Play a short game to fill in a minute now and then. The caregiver provides the *if* and the children add the *then*. Have a good time with unlikely *If's*.

"If you are sleepy...." - *"then you should sleep."*
"If an elf comes into this room...." - *"then...."*

CHECK YOUR PLANNING FOR THE THREE TO FIVES

As we have said, preschoolers like to do a lot of different things each day to use their growing bodies and minds. In any group of children, there will be a wide range of skills and abilities. So the best child care programs include a wide variety of experiences at different levels of difficulty. If you can check four of the five items in each section, your program probably respects the differences that will be found in any group of three, four and five year olds.

ACTIVE PLAY

____ Active play is available indoors.

____ Active play is planned for a range of skills, like walking a line on the floor to using the balance beam; climbing stairs, a ladder or rope ladder; throwing, catching and bouncing different-sized balls.

____ Games and activities are used to teach and practice skipping.

____ Obstacle courses are set up, "follow-the-leader" and other games are played to help children control and improve their movements.

____ Caregivers suggest and lead activities to encourage skills which children may not be doing on their own like jumping rope or running with kites on short strings.

FINGER AND HAND SKILLS

____ Children are allowed to use either hand as they choose.

____ There are ways for using hands and fingers: pasting, scissors, clay, play dough, puzzles, toys with small pieces, finger painting, egg beaters, sifter, doll clothes, woodworking tools, sandpaper, ways to practice buttoning and zipping.

____ Caregivers use finger plays like "Eensie Weensie Spider."

____ Toys with small pieces are at different levels of difficulty, like puzzles with four pieces, some with more.

____ Plans allow for difference: some children can scribble, some can practice writing their names and numbers; some can cut with one snip, some can cut angles and curves; some can lace cards, some can sew.

Turn page please.

SOCIAL AND PLAY SKILLS

____ Activities are used to encourage children to play together like a pretend corner, blocks, climbing toys and sandbox.

____ There is both time and space for pretend play without caregivers interfering.

____ Routines are used to help children learn first to share in putting toys away and later to put toys away independently.

____ Caregivers have matter-of-fact methods for dealing with children who show interest in sex and sex differences.

____ Caregivers know ways to help children learn skills of *sharing, taking turns* and *making friends.*

LANGUAGE AND THINKING

____ Caregivers plan activities for helping children develop their five senses.

____ Caregivers use every activity to help children learn language.

____ Plans include ways to help children learn labels, colors, numbers, parts of the body, matching, sorting and grouping and simple "if-then" patterns.

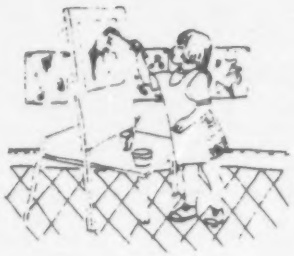
____ Caregivers know questions that can be answered in more than one way and how to ask them.

____ Activities allow some children to finish quickly, while others can add more detail and take longer to finish.

USING MATERIALS IN CREATIVE WAYS

HELP CHILDREN EXPRESS THEMSELVES

The activities and materials in the room can give the children ways to express their feelings. That happens best if you understand that it is the *doing* more than the final outcome that interests children. Watch three and four year olds finger paint. They *get into it*, watching the paint change as they move their arms and fingers up, down and around. They may have no goal. Their main joy is often the activity, not the final result. Knowing this, you will want to teach *how* to do something instead of *what*. You will suggest things, such as imagining how an elephant would walk. You will avoid giving hints or saying things like, "Walk this way like an elephant" or "Paint the grass green." Try to plan activities that will allow the children to show what and how they feel.



Here are some ways to help preschoolers express their ideas and feelings freely:

With music Let them make up their own songs and dances. This happens best when there is no audience.

With art Teach the skills to cut, paint, paste, and color. While the children use these materials, occasionally play loud, scary music or soft, pleasant music.

With storytelling Tell stories in which the characters get mad - really mad. Encourage the children to make up their own stories. A child may tell you a story about her drawing. Listen and write it down.

With puppets Tell children, "Sam, the puppet, is afraid of the dark." Let them make up their own words and actions to tell how Sam feels.

With toys and props Provide miniature toys, people, animals, furniture and buildings for pretend play. Keep a box of all different kinds of dress-up clothes handy.

TEACH *HOW TO* INSTEAD OF *WHAT TO* IN ART

The art materials and how you present them are an important part of the preschool environment. You will want to provide the space, time and materials for all kinds of art activities. Some children will need to be shown how to cut, how to paste, or how to paint. And this is a good way to look at your approach to the art activities. It is your job to teach *how* rather than *what* to do. Children like to do a variety of art activities - paint, color, paste, scribble and draw. They like to make collages, arranging and gluing small objects. They like to model clay and build things with wire, pipe cleaners or small scraps of wood. When you plan activities expect different outcomes from different children. Some children even may choose not to participate in a particular activity.

Creative art materials might include:

Beautiful junk such as egg cartons, paper towel rolls, buttons, scraps of fabric, pasta, beads, wire, seeds and shells.

Everyday household materials used in an unusual way. Make prints with things from around the house - a key, a cork, or a sponge. Use colored salt for sprinkling on paste.

Different ways to paint Put tempera in a roll-on deodorant jar. Paint with a feather. Do string painting, use spatter paint.

Different kinds of paper Use newspaper, tissue, gift wrap, construction paper or paper bags. Brown wrapping paper makes an attractive backing for seeds, sand, feathers and shells.

A piece of wood can be painted, dipped in paint and used to make prints, have things glued to it, pounded on table to make "music," and drawn on.

GET THE MOST FROM ART ACTIVITIES

There are many, many good ideas for art activities to use with preschool children. There are lots of good books with recipes for play dough, finger paint and ideas for different activities to try. When you look for activity books, choose those which show open-ended projects. Avoid those which expect each child to copy the same model, resulting in identical valentines, bunnies or clay pots. Try different activities and materials with the children to see which they like best. Use materials you like best. If you like to model clay, the children will share your enjoyment. Repeat their favorites from time to time. Activities which involve more than one thing are the most fun. When finger painting, for example, mix the paint without adding color. Then the children can decide which colors to add. Color mixing and discovery become a part of it, too. Set out three primary colors - red, yellow and blue. Let the children choose two colors to mix and see what happens. See the booklist on page 118 for some suggested activity books.

Finger Paint

1 cup laundry starch
1 cup cold water
4 cups boiling water
1/2 cup soap flakes

Mix starch and cold water. Pour into boiling water and whip with a wire whip. As it cools, whip in 1/2 cup soap flakes. Let the children shake on tempera paint for color.

Play Dough

Mix: 3 cups water, 2-4 teaspoons food coloring, 4 1/2 tablespoons oil, 1 drop of oil of cloves

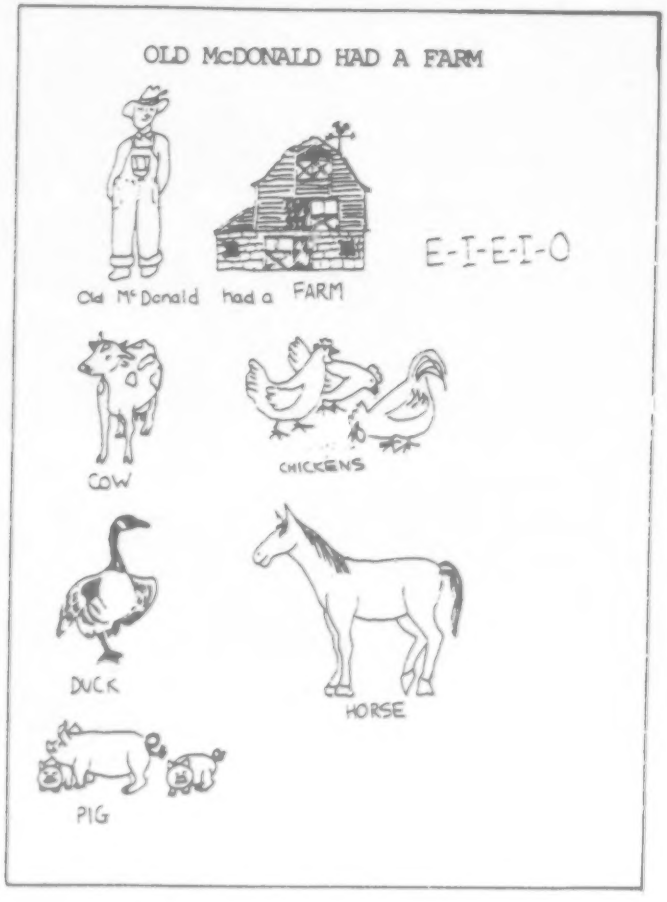
Mix dry ingredients and stir into water mixture:

6 cups flour
1 1/2 cups salt
3 tablespoons alum power

Add more water if too stiff, more flour if too sticky. Knead. Store in air-tight container in the refrigerator. The children can help make this recipe.

PROVIDE TIME FOR MUSIC IN GROUPS

Besides having a small music corner in the room, you will want to plan a regular music time. Music time with a group is best when it is short and simple. You can use this time in different ways on different days. Sing folk songs or songs you know from your own childhood. Sing songs which have movement to go with the words, such as "The Wheels On The Bus." Threes will find it hard to both sing and do hand movements. You may want to sing while they do the movements. Fours are a little better at this. By five, children like to act out songs, like "The Old Gray Cat Is Sleeping While The Mice Come Creeping." Sing songs the children know. They will ask for "Jingle Bells" in March. Sing chants and calls. Use picture charts for some songs. Leave the charts where the children can look at them on their own at another time. Pictures will help them to remember the words and they will sing the songs by themselves.



MOVE WITH MUSIC

Music time with small children naturally will be a time for movement. If a child wants to dance, let the children set the beat which you pick up on your instrument, a tambourine or a drum. If a group is moving, pick a beat to follow and ask the rest if they can move to that beat. Some may be able to and some not. Use records with a clear beat for the children to dance to. It is fun for the children to use scarves or streamers while they dance. Bells on elastic bands on their wrists or ankles add to a dance. Take any song you know and make up words. If you think you can't sing, chant the words. The children will join in with both words and movement. Try "Ring Around The Rosie" with "We All Jump Up" or some other movement to finish the verse. It is not your singing ability, but your joy, sense of humor and interest that counts.

Here are some ways to get the children moving:

Have fun on the floor. Sing songs about worms, lizards and snakes while the children wiggle and crawl. Sing songs about kittens and puppies while the children creep.

Add a beat. Have the children walk to the beat of your tambourine or drum. They can walk fast or slow and freeze when you stop. For variety have them walk like a baby, a monster or an animal.

Let the children make up dances. Ask for a *"running"* dance, a *"happy"* dance or a *"mad"* dance and then play a record with fast, light-hearted or loud music to match.

Share a dance you know. If you like to dance or just move to the music, share the fun you have with the children. Keep it simple so the children will feel free to join you. Preschool children need simple steps and the freedom to make up their own dances, too. Holding a child's hand helps the child feel the beat as you move to the music.

MOVE WITHOUT MUSIC

It may be easy for you to get your preschool children to run, jump, hop and skip. You may find it harder to think of and use other movement experiences. These activities are important. When children learn to control their bodies, they learn to move with grace and ease. Some caregivers find it hard to teach movement. This may be the result of various things. If you did not experiment with movement as a child, you may not be comfortable with your own body. You may feel silly or self-conscious because you have grown up thinking that adults are not supposed to be silly or have fun. When this happens you may find it hard to think of ways to move with the children or suggest ways for the children to move. To prepare for using movement with the children, begin with your own body. Find something - jogging, yoga, belly dancing, walking, swimming or volleyball - that makes you feel good. Look for books with movement activities. Think about what makes you feel good, allow yourself to be silly, take off your shoes, and have a good time moving with the children.

Have the children explore space. Ask the children to stretch to take up as much space as possible. Then they can curl up and use a little space. You can talk about elbow room, leg space and a hand's length.

Play games that require control of movement. Walking on a balance beam or straight line is good for this. It is hard for young children to move in slow motion, but it can be lots of fun. Have them pretend to go to sleep. When they wake up, they move ever so slowly as they brush their teeth or act out other things.

Make an obstacle course. Use chairs and tables, tires or big circles on the floor. Have the children carry a chair through this course without banging into anything, then set it down without making a noise.

Use props to encourage fun and movement. Have the children blow feathers or balloons. Let the children put bean bags on their heads as they walk around the room or on a balance beam.

TRY TO FORGET YOU'RE *GROWN-UP*

HOW *GROWN-UP* ARE YOU?

Think about how you would feel doing the things listed below in public or with a group of people. Put a 3 next to each behavior that would make you feel very embarrassed *or silly; a 2 by things that would make you feel a* little embarrassed *or silly doing; and a 1 by the things that you would feel* not at all *embarrassed or silly doing.*

____ singing by yourself

____ making funny faces

____ dancing around the room with a scarf in your hand

____ telling silly jokes

____ acting out animal behaviors and sounds

____ making funny sounds like a car, motorcycle or boat

____ swaying like a tree in the wind

____ stretching

____ running and playing games like tag

____ laughing out loud

____ making up imaginary stories

____ Add up your points.

If your total is more than 27 points, you may be so *grown-up* that it's hard for you to loosen up in the imaginative world that children see. If your score was between 20 and 27, you feel a little less *grown-up* and probably have fun yourself with preschoolers. A score of less than 19 points means you're very young at heart and probably are open to experimentation and creative play with preschoolers.

Sometimes *grown-up* means that we lose touch with our feelings and the unusual ways we used to see things. One of the exciting things about being with young children is that it gives you a chance to rediscover your imagination and enjoy having fun.

READ BOOKS WITH SMALL GROUPS

There will be times when you want to use books with a group. Pick stories that give an honest view of life and show sensitive feelings. Children usually like classics like Beatrix Potter's "Tale Of Peter Rabbit." When you use books with children, practice reading the stories ahead of time. Be dramatic. Enjoy the humor. Show the pictures to help children enjoy and understand the story. Watch the children. Their behavior will tell you if they like the book or not. From time to time, *tell a book* instead of reading it and showing the pictures. Some children will be surprised at first by this experience. Most children really like those special times when their caregiver tells a book. On a few occasions, use puppets or flannel boards to help tell a story.

Here are some general guidelines for choosing books:

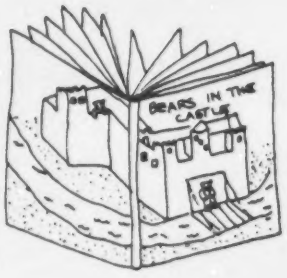
For threes pick simpler books. They like stories about real people, animals, cars, the family and the neighborhood. Save the fantasy stories for the older fours and fives. Threes, like all children, enjoy stories with repetition, such as "Not by the hair on my chiny, chin, chin" from the story of "The Three Little Pigs." These children like rhymes and stories with humor based on sounds.

Fours are more dramatic. They have more humor than threes and really enjoy funny words. They like a good story with action and detailed pictures. They like stories that give real information about animals, plants and people. Fours like a story with a real plot such as Grimm's "Shoemaker And The Elves."

Fives can sit still longer. They also like fantasy and scary stories because they see that they will end happily. Poems are fun. Try some from Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Child's Garden Of Verses.* Fives also like stories about going to school. They may want to act out their favorite stories or make up and tell stories of their own.

PUT BOOKS IN A QUIET CORNER

Books can be used in many ways. Children should be able to find and look at books on their own in the book area. The children will vary in age and experience with books. Some will need to be shown how to hold a book, turn the pages and learn that the little black marks are words. Books which get daily use must be sturdy. Use cloth books, well-bound books or inexpensive books. Change the books in the reading area every few weeks. Put some of the books away and display different ones. Remember, the reading corner is a soft, inviting place with rugs, pillows and relaxing colors. Put a book or two in other parts of the room. If you have seashells on a low table, find a picture book about shells to put there, too.



Things to look for when choosing books for the preschool room:

Choose good pictures. Look for books with clear photos or drawings with bright colors and plenty of action.

Simple objects are best. Try to find illustrations of simple things the children know about like animals, vehicles, flowers, trees and faces.

Find the right size. Pick small or medium-sized books that children can easily manage. Save the large books for group story time.

Use books to show things. Include books with pictures that show shapes, colors, numbers and the ABC's.

Look for large type. Select books with large print.

Another language helps. Include a few second language books. An example is Richard Scarry's *Mi Primer Gran Libro Para Leer.*

Tapes are fun. If you have a tape recorder, tape some of the children's favorite books. Provide earphones and let one or two listen to these stories in the reading corner.

CHOOSE BOOKS WITH A DIFFERENT VIEW OF THINGS

There are some special concerns that you may want to think about when you choose books to use with preschoolers. A child learns from parents, caregivers, television and books. These sources of information can present views which support the rights of everyone or favor a particular group or point of view. We can use books to show the children different ethnic groups and cultures. When children learn about other life-styles, differences become interesting instead of strange or unreal. Children can feel a sense of worth if they see their skin color and life-styles in books. So choose books with realistic photographs or drawings of as many different ethnic groups as possible. Look for stories with girls as main characters who are active and clever. Find books that show families without fathers, families with grandparents and families with lots of brothers and sisters. Include books about fathers who help care for children and mothers who work outside the home.

Books and picture collections that you make have the advantage of truly reflecting the children in your room:

Make your own picture collections. Cut pictures from magazines, mount on cardboard, cover with clear, self-sticking plastic and make your own pictures to use with the children.

Make your own books. Photograph the children. Put their pictures in albums. Write stories to go with the pictures.

Write group stories. Write stories of field trips or other things the group does. Use large sheets of paper on the wall or make a book of it.

Borrow books from the library. An easy way to add variety to the books in your room is to borrow books from a library.

Write the children's stories. Write down stories the children tell you. Make these into books.

USE TELEVISION WISELY

Watching television is part of some child care programs. Many centers do not use television at all. For one thing, young children learn best when they are active, move about and have a variety of experiences using things and playing with others. A child sitting in front of a TV set is passive, not active. Also, three and four year olds sometimes find it hard to tell what is true to life and what is not. Older children and adults know that it is just a part of the story when one character hits another. Young children think that hitting is acceptable behavior in real life. It might seem like a good idea to turn on the TV late in the day when everyone is tired. However, the programs aired at this time are not always the best for preschoolers. Select programs with care. The cartoons are often loud, full of running and hitting and have little that is thoughtful or positive. The reruns are usually shows which were made originally for adults. Television belongs in a child care center only when it is used carefully. Look for educational television shows and some commercial shows made especially for children.

If TV is a part of your program, here are some guidelines:

View TV with children. If you turn on a TV program, watch it with the children. This way you can explain and comfort a child who may be scared or upset by something on the screen. Watch for strong reactions and talk about what's happening to that child right then.

Set time limits. Let the children know in advance exactly what they can watch and for how long. Some recommend that preschoolers watch TV no more than one hour a day.

Plan follow-up activities. Make watching TV more meaningful. Sing some of the same songs, play games, or talk about what the children just saw on a TV program.

Find out more about it. For information and publications about TV and its effect on children write: Action For Children's Television, 46 Austin Street, Newtonville, Massachusetts 02160.

MAKE FOOD A TASTY PART OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Preschool children still are forming their eating habits and discovering which foods they like and which they dislike. New food experiences and cooking can be fun and an important part of their environment. Children carry their eating habits and feelings about food into their adult lives. Three, four and five year olds who are open to trying new foods and who eat the right amount of food will probably do so as adults. Food contains nutrients - the building blocks needed for growth. What children eat also affects how they learn and behave. So what children eat is important for them now and in the future. Your job is to encourage, but not force, the children to eat a variety of food. You can do this at snack time and mealtime or with new food experiences and cooking activities. The child care center cannot control the children's diets. How their parents eat and what the children see on television affect their food habits. Food and the eating of it is a personal, sometimes emotional, matter. Avoid saying anything to the children or parents about how or what is eaten away from the center. Your job is to provide nutritious, healthy food in a happy environment. The children and their families may follow the example you set.

Here are some ways to make food a part of the environment:

Use large, clear, colorful pictures of foods. Have pictures and books with fruits, vegetables and various foods in the room. After the children can identify and name foods, you can talk about such things as vitamins and minerals.

Make matching games of foods. The children can match toy fruits and vegetables with pictures. They can sort and match pictures of foods.

Have fun with food. Include new food experiences in center activities. Plan a Hawaiian Luau. Have the children make decorations. Play Hawaiian music while you serve fresh pineapple tidbits.

Be aware of children with allergies. The common allergy foods are those made with eggs, chocolate, milk or wheat.

SERVE HEALTHFUL SNACKS

Snacks are an important part of a child's total daily food intake. Children need vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients to be healthy and happy. Sugar does very little to promote growth, health, learning and good behavior. The best snacks are those without sugar added like raw vegetables and fruit, whole grain crackers and cheese sticks. *Natural* fruit juices and milk are good drinks. Whenever possible, let the children help prepare the snack. They can stuff celery with peanut butter or cream cheese and decorate with raisins. Try to use foods from different cultures. These can highlight the different backgrounds of the preschoolers while providing new food experiences for some of the children in the center. If you work in a military center outside the United States, use some of the local foods for snacks from time to time. Always include the children in preparing and serving snacks and food. Even three year olds can pour juice and set tables.

Here are some wholesome snack ideas:

Vegetables raw large carrots, cucumbers, cauliflower, green beans, turnips or green pepper;

Fruits and nuts fresh fruit tidbits or dried fruit like apricots and raisins; bits of fresh coconut;

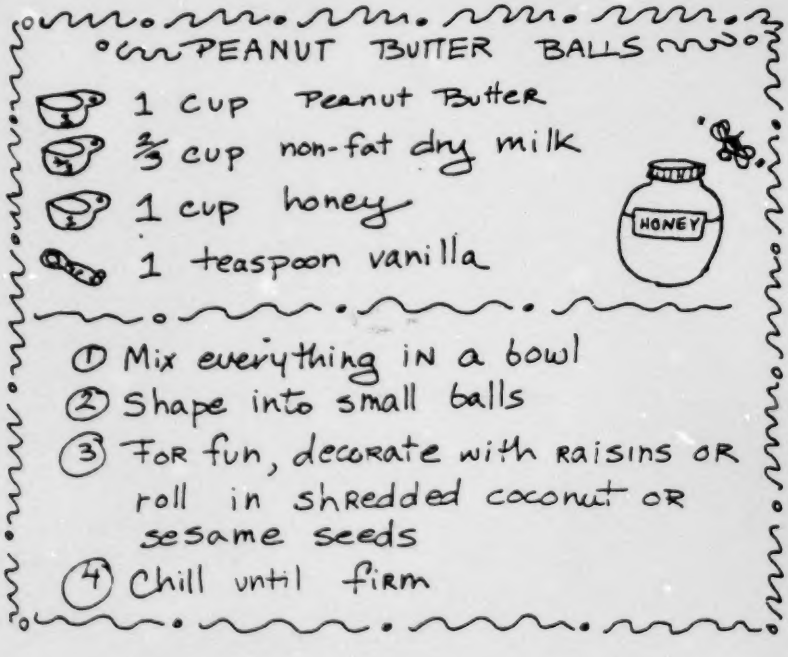
Grain crackers or tortillas with cheese or peanut butter, granola;

Dairy and meat products hard cooked eggs, cheese sticks, yogurt; slices of meat.

Make vegetables a fun treat. Make a car from celery stuffed with peanut butter. Use carrot slices for wheels. Add raisins for passengers. Celery and cheese sticks can be a boat with cars.

COOK WITHOUT HEAT

You will want to make cooking a regular part of your routine. If you do not have the use of a kitchen or small appliances, you can "cook" without heat. You can shake cream in a jar to make butter, hand crank ice cream, squeeze fresh orange juice or stuff dates with cream cheese. To succeed, you must plan carefully how you will cook with your children. Make the recipe by yourself before you use it with the children. As you follow the recipe, think through each step as you do it. Watch for things you do without thinking. Plan each step as you would do it with the children. Think of ways the children can take turns. One can break an egg. One can add vanilla. Another can add flour. Each can stir for ten counts. Decide, according to the age and experience of the children, how much they can do. The first time three year olds cook, their tasks will be simpler than if they were four or five year olds who have cooked several times with you. Later, when you actually cook with the children, have supplies, ingredients and sponges for clean-up ready before you begin. Put the recipe on a large wall chart with *picture* directions. This gives the children something to look at and talk about later. Remember, children may be more interested in cooking than eating. You need not prepare large amounts of food. A small taste for everyone will do.


PEANUT BUTTER BALLS
1 cup Peanut Butter
⅔ cup non-fat dry milk
1 cup honey
1 teaspoon vanilla
HONEY
① Mix everything in a bowl
② Shape into small balls
③ For fun, decorate with raisins or roll in shredded coconut or sesame seeds
④ Chill until firm

COOK WITH SMALL APPLIANCES

You can add to the experience of cooking with children by bringing small, electric appliances like a fry pan, a popcorn popper, a portable oven, or a blender into the room. Plan for five or six children to cook at a time. This way, you can use knives and hot appliances safely. You can make it clear how many can help by having that exact number of aprons. Have cooking often enough so that the children will know that they will get a turn another time. Plan to cook while the other children are doing activities which require little supervision, such as during the children's free-choice time when they are used to playing on their own. Read the recipe aloud before you begin even if the children can't read. You teach about what a recipe is and how a recipe is used and indirectly teach reading. The health and working rules should be clear. All cooks wash their hands, wear aprons and help clean-up. These rules might be posted near the cooking area. While you are cooking talk about colors, odors and feel of the food. Talk about changes. Pudding changes from liquid to solid. Cooking can be a very rewarding project with young children, but it requires *careful, advance planning.*

Here are some ideas to get you started cooking with the children using small appliances in the room:

Pancakes Let the children put the batter in the pan and turn them. Roll the pancakes and eat them with fingers.

Stew Read the story "Stone Soup," by Marcia Brown, and have each child bring a vegetable from home to cut up and put into the soup.

Bread Use whole grains to make the dough and let each child shape a roll.

Tortillas Let the children mix, pat, cook and eat with their fingers.

Scrambled eggs Breaking the eggs, mixing, cooking and eating them is great fun.

Popcorn Pop it; then eat it plain or mix with grated cheese.

CHECK YOUR CREATIVITY AND SKILL WITH MATERIALS

Remember, when we talk about preschool environments that includes the people there. What caregivers do and how they do it is important. Caring for young children is both fun and hard work. Experience and skill make it more fun and less work. Use this last checklist to discover your own strengths. Pick any item that you don't check as a place to begin improving your skills as a caregiver.

____ I learn from my own experiences by keeping a log or daily diary or thinking about what happened in the room or play yard each day.

____ I repeat my successes and look for new ways of doing things when problems arise.

____ I write down my plans for the day.

____ I arrive early enough to collect my thoughts and needed materials.

____ I know finger plays, songs, chants, rhymes, stories and games so I can help the children wait or change from one activity to another.

____ I know both group and individual activities that most preschoolers can and like to do.

____ I am always looking for materials or new ideas to use with the children in my care. I use books, magazines, other caregivers and my director as resources.

____ I share my poems, songs and stories that I make up with the children in a fun way.

____ I plan art projects that the children will enjoy and don't worry about creating products to please the parents.

____ I examine the children's books to see what "messages" the pictures contain about families, sex and cultural differences.

____ I make picture collections and books to reflect the children and their experiences.

____ If I turn on the TV, I do so for a real reason and watch the program with the children.

FINDING RESOURCES TO SUPPORT CAREGIVING

KEEP TRACK OF GOOD IDEAS

It is interesting to play a new game, try a new craft project, read a new story or sing a different song. You will find some groups of children like one kind of activity more than another. The challenge is to discover what things you and a particular group of children have the most fun doing. Once you have found and used an activity you and the children like, it is a good idea to keep track of that idea for future use. There are different ways to collect new ideas. Some caregivers jot notes on the back of napkins, some make cards and file them in boxes, others make their own notebooks. Caregivers also find picture collections helpful. Some caregivers make and use activity cards in their rooms. These cards list things to do in an area. For example, a card in the music area might suggest different listening games to play with the children.

Your own private collection Ideas - even good ones - have a way of slipping away. When you see a good idea that you'd like to remember, write it down and file it for later use. You may choose to write your ideas on index cards and keep them in a recipe file box. Or you may choose to keep a notebook. A three-ring binder allows you to add pages and reorganize as you choose. It helps to file ideas by categories like *movement, art, active games* and *poems*. The advantage of file cards is their convenient size. You can put a card in a pocket. Then you can quickly glance at the words to a new song or finger play.

Picture collections You may want to start your own picture collection. Some caregivers save and share good pictures with others in their center. Large, colorful, simple pictures of animals, vehicles and people give you and the children real things to talk about. Large pictures are best stored flat. A cardboard box with cardboard sheets for section dividers serves this purpose. Pictures which are mounted on cardboard and covered with clear plastic self-sticking paper can be used again and again.

Activity cards An envelope taped to the wall or a shelf near an activity area can hold activity cards for that area. Each card can list the materials needed, how to use things or what to talk about for the activity in that area that day.

LEARN THE ART OF SCROUNGING

As a caregiver you will find learning the art of scrounging a big help. Once you get the habit, you always will be on the lookout for materials that can be used by the children in your center. Some caregivers even get a sense of satisfaction as they discover different or original uses for other people's cast-offs. For example, junk mail, old catalogs, magazines and newspapers are good for cutting activities or art projects. Learning to ask for materials is basic to the art of scrounging. When others learn you work in a child care center, often they are glad to have you haul away their surplus materials or outdated supplies. Scrap lumber, fabric, packing crates or materials, paint, wallpaper, carpeting and plants are just a few of the things you might uncover. Remember, local public libraries are good sources for books, films, records and other materials. Be aware that there probably are sources for surplus or donated materials on the installation where your center is located. Discuss with your director these sources for free materials as outlined in *Installation Resources Available To Military Child Care Centers*, which is a part of the director's *Administrative Guidebook*. Below are some other ideas to help you get started.

The Government Printing Office is a good source of free and inexpensive publications. Order the following by name and number from DHEW, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Washington, DC 20201:

Beautiful Junk (No. CHD 76-31036) - Tells where to get free and inexpensive craft materials; includes 42 project suggestions. The list of sources includes everything from soft-drink companies and carpet shops to parents, and suggests some things to ask for from each.

Fun In The Making (No. OCD-73-31) - A collection of ideas for making toys and games.

From Government Printing Office No. 15, U.S. Government Printing Office, Box 713, Pueblo, Colorado 81002:

Christmas Decorations Made With Plant Materials - Inexpensive decorations for the Christmas season.

From National Wildlife Federation, 1416 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036:

Recycle For The Birds, *A Pool For The Backyard*, and *Invite Wildlife To Your Backyard* - Nature books for ideas caregivers can use.

There are books which list sources of free and inexpensive materials. These books include the addresses of companies and agencies which have free or inexpensive materials you can use with the children in your room:

Monahan, Robert, *Free And Inexpensive Materials For Preschool And Early Childhood*, 2nd. ed. Belmont, California: Fearon Publishers, Inc., 1977.

Moore, Norman R. (Ed.), *Free And Inexpensive Learning Materials*. Nashville, Tennessee: Office of Educational Services, Peabody College For Teachers, 1976.

You can make many games and learning activities from recycled materials and household items. This book tells you how to begin:

Mayer, Colleen and Tolzin, Leah, *Homemade Developmental Toys And Activities*, 1978, available through Easter Seal Society for Alaska Crippled Children and Adults, 726 E Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99501.

One way to get shelves, furniture or play units to fit your specific needs at a savings is to build your own. On some military installations you may have access to carpentry services or volunteer labor. *Pre-School Equipment* and *Children's Things* are illustrated plan books with price estimates and construction plans. These are available from:

Stone Mountain Educational Projects, Inc., Roaring Brook Farm, Conway, Massachusetts 01341

Another publication for do-it-yourselfers features things you can build:

Griego, Margaret and Hall, Wes, *Build Your Own But Have A Reason*, is available through Parent Child Center, Ann Heiman, Director, Box 369, LaSalle, Colorado, 1978.

The following book outlines a project involving parents who planned and built an outdoor play environment:

Dickerson, Mildred, (Project Director), *Developing The Outdoor Learning Center*, 1977,-Southern Association on Children Under Six, Box 5403 Brady Station, Little Rock, Arkansas 72205.

More self-help ideas for finding and using materials are in this big book filled with photographs and plans:

Hogan, Paul, *Playgrounds For Free*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1974.

Below are some recommended books and records which will add to what you have already learned in *Creating Environments For Preschoolers*. In the first list, each book is filled with suggestions for child care programs and activities. Each contains lots of information and ideas, and you won't necessarily need or want every book in the list. You will have to decide which books best suit your needs. In the second list, each book explores just one subject in detail. It was hard trying to keep our lists of books and records short. We could not list all the many good books and records which are available. Caregivers and directors will have to discover their own favorite resources to help make their child care program as creative as possible.

A STARTER BOOKSHELF

Creative Play For The Developing Child by Clare Cherry. Belmont, California: Fearon Publishers, Inc., 1976.

This is a very readable book with candid photographs and good suggestions to try in your own center. This book makes clear how children learn through play. It tells how to create an environment which will teach the children through their own interests, as they choose their play.

Helping Children Grow: The Adults Role by Bruce D. Grossman and Carol R. Keyes. Wayne, New Jersey: Avery Publishing Group, Inc., 1978.

This book is designed to help volunteers, assistants and students work in child care settings. Nevertheless, it has some good information useful to all caregivers. The format makes this book easy to use. Each topic discussed, such as blocks or science, always includes two helpful section - *Some Basic Hints* and *Developmental Reminders*. The subjects especially helpful to caregivers in a military setting include discussions of drop-in care; working with children from different racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds; working with bilingual children; and working with economically disadvantaged children.

Helping Young Children Learn, 2nd ed., by Evelyn Goodenough Pitcher, et al. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1974.

Besides suggestions for lots of activities, this book gives reasons why and how to present certain things. The section on books is very complete and discusses these special concerns: ethnic awareness, sex-role typing, the single-parent home and death. It has a very complete list of books for preschool children classified by subject and age.

An Activities Handbook For Teachers Of Young Children, 2nd ed., by Doreen Croft and Robert D. Hess. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975.

This book has good teaching tips. The chapters are language, science, art, pre-math and cooking. The art section has many recipes and good ideas for preschool children. It contains lists of books to help you select books to use with the children. Some of the special concerns

include multi-ethnic books and books for children about death, moving and other childhood experiences.

Resources For Creative Teaching In Early Childhood Education by Bonnie Mack Flemming, et al. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1977.

This is a big, thick book. A resource that directors may want in their library. It has a good section on multi-ethnic awareness and includes authentic activities to reinforce this. Activities are suggested for themes with lots of music, rhymes and finger games included.

Child's Play: An Activities And Materials Handbook by Barbara R. Trencher. Atlanta, Georgia: Humanics Limited, 1976.

This book has a good section on planning environments and using space. It includes sound tips for using materials and planning for preschool children. It includes developmental guidelines for children two to six, listing typical motor, social and intellectual development for these ages.

I Am! I Can! The Daycare Handbook by Grace L. Mitchell and Harriet Chmela. Stanford, Connecticut: Greylock Publishers, 1977.

The authors emphasize that the child who accepts and feels good about herself is ready to learn and try new things. The book suggests attitudes and activities that caregivers can use with preschool children. Subjects range from health and safety tips to daily routines, recipes, music, field trips, crafts, movement, games and growing things. The storytelling, poetry and music tips are outstanding. This book also includes useful information for directors about staffing and operating a child care center.

Serving Preschool Children by Donald J. Cohen (Ed.) in collaboration with Ada S. Brandegee. Washington, DC, DHEW Publication No. (OHD) 74-1057.

This book contains basic information about the three- to six-year-old child and gives basic information for planning a day care program. It also covers the administrative details of budgeting, operating and involving parents.

Caring For Children - Numbers One Through Ten by Lois B. Murphy and Ethel M. Leeper. Washington, DC, Department of Health, Education and Welfare:

#1 *The Ways Children Learn* (OHD) 75-1026
#2 *More Than A Teacher* (OHD) 75-1027
#3 *Preparing For Change* (OHD) 76-31028
#4 *Away From Bedlam* (disruptive behaviors) (OHD) 75-1029
#5 *The Vulnerable Child* (handicaps, emotions, fears, stress) (OCD) 73-1030.

#6 *A Setting For Growth* (OHD) 77-31031
#7 *The Individual Child* (OHD) 76-31032
#8 *From "I" To "We"* (OCD) 76-1033
#9 *Conditions For Learning* (OHD) 76-31034
#10 *Language Is For Communication* (OHD) 75-1035

This series is well written and illustrated with appropriate photographs. Each booklet explores a topic of concern to caregivers, directors and parents.

ADD ANOTHER SHELF

Creative Movement For The Developing Child: A Nursery School Handbook For Non-Musicians by Clare Cherry. Belmont, California: Fearon Publishers, Inc., 1971.

With this book you can have rhythmic activities even if you have little or no training in music.

The Mother-Child Cookbook (An Introduction To Educational Cooking) by Nancy J. Ferreira. Menlo Park, California: Pacific Coast Publishers, 1969.

If you want to get some good background information to make the most of cooking experiences with preschool children, this is a good book. It also contains good recipes to use with young children.

Kick The Junk Food Habit With Snackers by Maureen and Jim Wallace. Seattle, Washington 98121: Madona Publishers, Inc., 2116 Western Avenue, 1978.

The 300 recipes included use no refined sugar, no artificial colorings, no imitation flavoring and no chemical preservatives.

Cultural Awareness For Young Children by Judy Allen, et al. Dallas, Texas: The Learning Tree, 9998 Ferguson Road 75228, 1975.

This book stresses how to use authentic cultural information with preschool children. It has lots of good activities to involve the children in doing and pretending. Some ideas, unfortunately, seem unauthentic, such as asking the children to pretend that sardines are raw fish.

Listen! And Help Tell The Story by Bernice Wells Carson. New York: Abbingdon, 1965.

This book helps children learn to listen as they wait to join in. It includes finger games, action verses and stories, as well as some with sound effects and songs with a refrain and chorus.

Finger Play by Mary Mitter and Paula Zajan. New York: G. Schrimer, 1955.

The finger plays include music and movements for "Join In The Game," "Where Is Thumbkin?" and "I'm A Little Teapot."

Science Experiences For Young Children by Viola Carmichael. Los Angeles: Southern California Association for the Education of Young Children, 1969.

The sections of this book are plants, animals, weather, human body, cooking, machines, developing concepts, etc. You are given background information, class projects, arts and crafts ideas and book lists.

No Two Alike edited by Nancy Witting. Newton, Massachusetts: Education Development Center, Inc., 1974.

This book will give you background information, help you examine your feelings and teach you skills to use with children with disabilities.

Mud, Sand And Water by Dorothy M. Hill. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1977.

The photographs alone make this a fine book. Both children and adults are pictured delighting in mud, sand and water!

Nature Activities For Early Childhood by Janet Nickelsburg. Menlo Park, California: Addison Wesley Publishing Company, 1976.

This book will help you make outdoor experiences meaningful and fun for young children. Each chapter has a short summary of useful information, suggested activities, lists of helpful materials, new words to know and suggested books on the subject for both adults and children.

Let's Play Outdoors by Katherine Read Baker. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1834 Connecticut Avenue, NW 20009.

This inexpensive booklet has charming photographs of preschool children doing a wide variety of outdoor play activities.

Touch! 48 Tactile Experiences For Children, Plus 34 Art Media Recipes To Make And Use by Joy Wilt and Terre Watson. Waco, Texas: Creative Resources, 1977.

This book shows you how to help young children explore the world through the sense of touch. This is an easy-to-use book filled with photographs and clear instructions.

Partners In Play: A Step-By-Step Guide To Imaginative Play In Childhood by Dorothy G. Singer and Jerome L. Singer. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1977.

This book will help you see the joy and fun of play. It tells what make-believe does for children and how adults can develop their imaginations, too. Then it suggests props, settings and ways to encourage pretend play. It ends with lists of recommended reading and listening for children and adults.

Explore And Create by Dixie Hibner and Liz Cromwell. Livonia, Michigan: Partner Press, 1979.

This has a section on indoor and outdoor games that would be good for fives. It also includes arts and craft projects and recipes, as well as ideas for snacks and cooking in the classroom.

RECORDS

Getting To Know Myself, Hap Palmer (Educational Activities, Inc., Freeport, New York 11520).

This record has a rock beat and gives good directions for using the body to music.

Counting Games And Rhythms For The Little Ones and *Travelin' With Ella Jenkins*, Ella Jenkens (Folkways Records and Service Corporation, 43 West 61st Street, New York, NY 10023).

Both Hap Palmer and Ella Jenkins have lots of records for young children. Some you will like more than others. Try these as starters.

We All Live Together, Vol. I and II, created by Steve Milang and Greg Scelsa (Youngheart Music Education Service, Los Angeles, California 90027).

A variety of songs for children, including rhythm and movement songs, activity songs, call and response, sing-a-longs, and resting songs.

Free To Be...You And Me (Bell Records, *MS.* Magazine, Dept. R., 370 Lexington Avenue, New York 10017).

This includes songs and sketches about modern life like "Parents Are People" and "Sisters And Brothers."

Abiyoyo, Pete Seeger (Folkways FTI500).

This record has two stories on one side and children's songs on the other. A song tames the giant monster Abiyoyo, and the children will easily learn and sing this chant. Peter Seeger has other delightful records for children.

Peter And The Wolf, Prokofiev, narrated by Leonard Bernstein (Columbia CC25501).

Music on one side, the story narrated on the other.

Authentic Sound Effects, Jack Holyman, creator and producer (Elektra Records EKS7251).

This record begins and ends with the sounds of a squeaky door and has the noises of many machines and life experiences in between.

You Are Special, Fred Rogers (Columbia CC24518).

This is just one of serveral of Fred Rogers' delightful albums. One song on this album reassures children they can't go down the drain.

Songs Of Joy, Diane Hartman Smith (Joy Records, Box 58, Aspen, Colorado 81611).

These are happy songs that will get your preschoolers to move, sing and dance.

Saturday Morning Children's Concert, narrated by Dexter Michael (Golden Records LP219).

For children who can listen to music for several minutes at a time, this album presents a variety of tempos and moods.

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